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[IN THE FOREST.]

ALEXINA.

CHAPTER IX.

Waking, I must dream no more,
Night has lovelier dreams in store.
Picture dear, farewell to thee;
Be this image left with me. *Miss London.*

THE breakfast-room of Egremont was a pleasant apartment with an oriel window looking out upon the sea, and set with quaint, diamond-shaped panes of glass of various hues, which the rays of the morning sun enlightened. The room had a warm and summer-like aspect, owing to the ruddy silk panelling in the oaken wall, the glowing curtains, and the fire in the grate, and its homeliness was increased by the round table that stood between the window and the fire, bathed in the glow of each, presenting a festive appearance with its display of silver and crystal and dainty edibles.

It was in this apartment that the family and guests of Egremont assembled on the morning subsequent to the attempted assassination of Lord Ashcroft.

The host and hostess looked very anxious, and the manner of each was full of half-suppressed excitement.

Lord Egremont's handsome face seemed to have gained several deeply graven lines during the past night, and her ladyship's eyes had a troubled, apprehensive expression, as if they expected an impending blow.

The Lady Lorean looked as though she had slept but little, and that her waking hours had been spent in brooding over the attempt upon her brother's life. Lord Ashcroft had a quiet, weary air, the consequence less of sleeplessness than of vain attempts to account for the mystery of his spectral visitor.

Lyle Indor affected cheerfulness and gaiety, but his manner was full of unobtrusive sympathy with the guests of the family as well as their troubled entertainers.

The only undisturbed member of the party was the heiress.

Calm and unmoved as though her sleep and her thoughts had never been encroached upon by any discordant emotion, with her usual imperious air and queenly manner, the Lady Alexina strove to be, as heretofore, the prominent feature of the scene, and to attract all eyes to herself in continual and unflagging adulation.

"The storm without has quite cleared away!" remarked Lady Egremont as a beam of sunshine flashed upon the table. "Who would have thought last evening when the moon arose that we should have such a storm before morning, or that it would be succeeded by such a charming winter's day?"

The Lady Lorean made some reply, for courtesy's sake, knowing that her hostess had spoken merely to arouse a cheerful conversation, and then looked out of the window at the sea, which swept over the rocks in those long swells which always succeed a storm.

"We had a terrible night!" resumed Lady Egremont, with a shudder, her face becoming pale with the remembrance. "I could not sleep after—the assault upon Lord Ashcroft; and it seemed to me that the very demon of murder was loose. Every shriek of the wind seemed to me a cry of the dying, and every moan of the waves had something fearfully human in it. And that was not all," she added, in a lower, fainter tone, and shivering as with cold—"They say the ghost of the Lady Jasmine walked last night!"

"The ghost!" cried Alexina, with undisguised fear. "I am glad it did not visit me! Who saw it Lady Egremont?"

"Toplift, my faithful old nurse, told me that she saw it!"

"Toplift!" repeated the heiress, with a scornful smile.

"Toplift is mysterious enough to be herself taken for a ghost," remarked Lyle Indor, humorously. "That nurse of yours, Aunt Evelyn, always seems to me like a grim relic of a former age—she goes about so silently, coming upon one in the corridors without warning, and looking at one with her bright eyes as if she would read one's thoughts. It is well for

her," he added, "that she did not live one or two centuries ago, or she would assuredly have been burned or drowned for a witch!"

"Nonsense, Lyle," returned Lady Egremont, with visible displeasure at her nephew's words. "Toplift is merely a good, faithful creature, with not a thought beyond serving me well and securing a home for her old age. But we were talking of the ghost. I fancied that I heard its singing—"

"At what hour?" eagerly inquired Lord Ashcroft.

"After the assault upon you. It was after that that the ghost walked, Toplift said—she is very intelligent for a woman of her class in life—that the spirit of murder was abroad, and that consequently the soul of poor Lady Jasmine could not rest!"

The Lady Lorean smiled incredulously.

Lord Ashcroft played with his spoon and remained silent.

"I should die if I were to see the spectre!" said the Lady Alexina. "She never used to walk, as Lady Egremont calls it—that is, she had not been seen for many years until about three years since."

"You mean that if she were seen you did not know of it, Xina," said Lady Egremont. "I think the fishers along the coast could tell you that they and their fathers before them have seen the Spectre of Egremont from the time of the Lady Jasmine's tragic death!"

"I remember—the housekeeper told me all about it once. Ever since I heard that the house was haunted I have asked my maid to sleep in the ante-room of my chamber, for fear the ghost might visit me!" declared the heiress. "I can imagine how it looks. She must be tall, with a ghastly, forbidding countenance—"

"That description shows that you are unfamiliar with the Lady Jasmine's portrait, Alexina," remarked Lord Egremont, arousing from his abstraction. "They say that she appears as a young girl of sixteen, with a sweet, child-like face, and dressed in the style of the days in which she lived. The sight of this spectre is said never to inspire dread!"

"As a girl of sixteen!" said the Lady Lorean.

"Why, was the Lady Jasmine so young when she died?"

"Yes, she had not attained the age of seventeen. In those days girls were wedded earlier than they are now."

"A wife and mother at sixteen!" mused the Lady Loreana. "Poor child! She should herself have been in the nursery at that age! She was not so old by two years as Alexandra!"

"And she looked five years younger!" said Lord Egremont.

"Did you ever see the spectre?" inquired the heiress.

"Once, Xina—a long time ago!"

The Lady Alexina, whose curiosity was piqued at this response, would have questioned her guardian respecting this encounter, but there was something in his looks and tone that showed her that the subject was not a pleasant one to him, and that he would not be likely to satisfy her inquiries.

While these remarks were being made Lord Ashcroft had listened intently, conscious that Lady Egremont's gaze was fixed upon his countenance, as if she were trying to read his thoughts.

"I should like to show you the Lady Jasmine's picture this morning, Lord Ashcroft," said the heiress as he looked up. "You seem to be interested in the spectre, and you will be even more so when you see her portrait. It looks exactly as she did. I saw this ghostly appearance once, and, though there was something shadowy about it, it looked not a day older than the being represented in the portrait."

Lord Ashcroft mentally recalled his observation of the previous evening that his mysterious visitor had an unreal appearance.

He was not in the least superstitious, but his entrance into a family where supernatural visitations were discussed equally with the natural, and where ghostly apparitions were believed in and talked of as plain matters of fact, and where he had himself witnessed an appearance altogether inexplicable, was sufficient to stagger his plain common sense.

"Our remarks about the spectre," said Lord Ashcroft, may seem to you quite childish," said Lady Egremont, smiling, "but the spectre has all been taught to believe in the family portrait, and I never succeeded to me to doubt its appearance—not even before I held it myself. So many people had seen it, and they could have had no motive for deception in professing to see what they had not, that I never entertained a doubt of its reality!"

"There are many things we cannot explain," said Lord Ashcroft, reflectively.

Lady Egremont regarded him keenly and sharply for an instant, made a courteous response, and then, as all had breakfasted, gave the signal to arise from the table.

"As we were speaking of the Lady Jasmine, my lord," she said, accepting his proffered arm, "permit me to show you her picture while your interest in the subject continues!"

Lord Ashcroft replied that nothing would please him so well as a visit to the Egremont picture-gallery, and his hostess then conducted him up the staircase to the second floor, where the gallery was situated.

Lyle Indor, with the heiress resting on his arm, followed, and behind them came the Lady Loreana, Lord Ashcroft and Lord Egremont.

The long and wide apartment, known as the picture-gallery, was warmed by means of an antique bronze stove, and its mosaic floor was polished to the last degree of brightness. It was lighted by a large skylight, which exhibited the pictures to the best advantage, and as Lord Ashcroft looked up and down the walls his cultivated tastes were gratified by beholding more than one genuine work of the old masters.

The sides of the room were covered with paintings, row above row, and one of these rows, going completely round the room, was composed entirely of Egremonts, beginning with a picture of the grim Sir Jasslyn d'Egremont, the founder of the family.

His hostess conducted Lord Ashcroft to this picture first of all, taking evident pride in the old warrior, whose coat of mail was faithfully portrayed, and carefully preserved in the library below.

"Just observe, my lord," she said, "how strongly my husband resembles his ancestor. The features, the dark hair and eyes particularly, and the Roman nose, are almost exactly reproduced in the present lord, and yet you can see for yourself the age of the picture."

The resemblance was certainly remarkable, yet there was also a striking dissimilarity, the features in the portrait forming a face decidedly foreign, while his descendant's was as decidedly English in its appearance.

The next picture was that of Sir Jasslyn's lady, and the next represented their son, a pensive-faced youth, with none of the martial ardour of his sire,

but with a poet's soul looking through his dreamy eyes.

His sons, however, were reproductions of Sir Jasslyn.

Lord Ashcroft was interested in looking down this long line of portraits and noting the difference in character of the successive Lords of Egremont, and wondering which of her ancestors the Lady Alexina most resembled in heart—for she was very like them all in her features.

Lady Egremont gave the history of the original of each portrait as they went along, but when they came to that of the Lady Jasmine she simply announced the fact, without alluding to her fate.

Lord Ashcroft noticed it with a paling face and a heart that beat tumultuously.

Mellowed as was the painting by age, the pictured face looked as fair and as fresh as if painted upon the previous day.

It was the face of his mysterious visitor.

There was the same sweetly arched brow, the same mysterious lovely eyes, the same gentle mouth, the same child-like purity of expression, the same saintly look overall that he had observed in his strange visitor.

Yet there was something missing in the portrait, an ineffable, nameless charm, that had belonged to his visitor, but Lord Ashcroft fancied that the fault had been with the painter, or that the grace and charm he had noticed were too subtle to be caught and impressed upon canvas.

Forgetful that Lady Egremont was watching him, or that the remainder of the party were near at hand, Lord Ashcroft studied the portrait with intensity.

He noticed that the hair in the picture was of a bronze hue, with golden waves in it, just as his visitor's had been, and it was arranged in the same quaint, becoming manner, exhibiting one tiny shell-shaped curl.

The attire too was the same, even to the lace frill encircling the slender throat and falling over the graceful shoulders, and the silvery dress was laced in front with amaranth, and pinned at the top of the arms, falling away in long pointed sleeves like those of a bishop.

The hands of the picture were painted as if clasped, and upon them were represented several antique rings—precisely similar to those he had noticed on the fingers of his visitor.

"Strange! strange!" he murmured, his disbelief in supernatural appearances receiving a severe shock. "Do you know the story of the Lady Jasmine, my lord?" inquired Lady Egremont.

"I know something of it. My sister told me on the evening of our arrival of her sad fate, but she had not time to go into full particulars, even had she known them."

"Perhaps, then, you would like to hear more about her," said her ladyship, observing that the other members of the party had crossed the gallery to regard a landscape by a Dutch painter, and that Lord Ashcroft showed no desire to leave his present position. "She was an Egremont and a cousin of her husband. She was the daughter of him whose picture stands below the preceding earl's. She was married to her cousin because the family desired it, but the young people loved each other as fondly and truly as though they had not been designed for each other from the moment of Jasmine's birth. There was something intense in her husband's love for Jasmine, and, unfortunately, he possessed an uncontrollable disposition, which no affection on her part could subdue."

"I can readily believe it," said Lord Ashcroft, his gaze wandering from the portrait of Jasmine to that of her husband. "I should think him a man of strong passions, judging from his picture."

"After the birth of their son the earl seemed to get the better of his jealousy, although he kept his young wife carefully mured up here at Egremont, even leaving her so when obliged to make occasional visits to court. There is no doubt but that she had sometimes longings for a change of scene, for her whole life had been passed within these walls, but she contented herself with her simple amusements and with her babe, whom she was destined to leave motherless before he had attained a twelvemonth. She was but a child, as you can judge, a simple, innocent child, and it was her very love for her husband that brought about the final tragedy."

"How could that be?"

"The earl was always praising her beauty, and declaring that she was the loveliest being he had ever beheld; and every now and then talked of having a painter from London to take her portrait, and he never did, because he feared to allow any eyes but his own to rest upon his treasure. In one of his absences at court the Lady Jasmine encountered upon the beach an amateur artist, the son of a neighbouring gentleman, and their acquaintance pro-

gressed until she requested him to paint her portrait for a gift to the earl, her husband. The artist was engaged to be married to a foreign lady, and surely there was no harm in the young wife's request. The artist came again and again, of course, and the picture was finished—the very picture you are regarding."

Lord Ashcroft surveyed it with renewed interest.

"The earl had, it seemed," continued Lady Egremont, "enjoined his page to keep strict watch over his lady, and the bright, intelligent lad took the order, whether rightfully or not, to keep strict espionage. It was when the picture was about half finished that the page was missing one morning from Egremont, and a thorough search for him resulted only in the discovery that he had taken with him the swiftest horse in the stables. As you may imagine, the page went to London and sought out his master—no slight journey in those days—and told him that the Lady Jasmine had a lover who sought her presence every day. The lad neglected to state that the countess invariably received him in the presence of her waiting-woman, and he did not know of the picture—the simple explanation of the artist's visit!"

"I can imagine the rest," said Lord Ashcroft, with a pitiful look at the portrait of the ill-fated bride.

"You can imagine how quickly the earl sprang to the saddle and set out for Egremont, and how his jealousy foamed up to fury as he came nearer and nearer his home. He was days in coming. The weather was bad, it rained, and the roads were not in good condition, but the very absence of his progress only served to add fuel to the flame raging within his heart."

"At last, without his page, who had been left behind in the last day's rapid journey, Lord Egremont entered his dwelling and listened to his lady's chamber. In another mood the picture that met his gaze might have been regarded differently, but then he only saw that his wife was smiling upon a fair-haired youth who knelt at her feet, holding up to her gaze the finished portrait. As he did, he knew nothing of the portrait and in his rage, now he did not even see that the nurse was now holding his son in her arms, and smiling at the picture. There was nothing of the lover in the attitude of the artist had he but known the fact, and nothing of the lover in the artist's thoughts, for, had his heart been disengaged, there was a purity and saintliness about the fair young wife and mother that would have made such thoughts sacrilege."

"True," sighed Lord Ashcroft as her ladyship paused. "She looks like one to be worshipped."

"Infuriated by the artist's attitude the earl rushed upon him with such anger in his eyes and manner that the artist fled precipitately. Instead of demanding an explanation from his wife, or pursuing the artist, or looking upon the fallen portrait, Lord Egremont drew a dagger he wore in his belt, plunged it into the breast of his wife, and then, unheeding her terrified shriek, took her to the open window and flung her out upon the rocks more than a hundred feet below. The nurse, who witnessed the scene, said afterwards that the very of the young wife as she descended to the rocks chilled her very blood. The earl stabbed himself and sprang out after her. Both were killed instantaneously by the fall, if the Lady Jasmine's life did not go out with that fearful shriek!"

"A terrible story."

"Yes, it was terrible. The nurse told it many times to the son whom she lived to see grow to manhood, and whose children she nursed, and it has been handed down to the present time. When about to follow his wife the earl uttered a curse, upon his race which has never failed of effect from that day to this. I cannot see why he should have wished to curse his innocent son, but in that terrible hour he may not have known what he said, or did. The chamber is that now boarded up, and no one has used it since that day. The Lady Jasmine wore the dress you see in the picture, with the same jewels, when she was thrown into the sea."

The last sentence impressed Lord Ashcroft deeply. "She is always seen in that attire," said her ladyship. "I wish that you might see the spectre some time if your nerves are strong. But I fear I have wearied you. The next picture is that of the son as early bereaved of his parents."

Lord Ashcroft looked at it with interest, but there was so much of the father in the manly face, for it had been taken many years later, that he soon turned from it.

The others now crossed over to look at the Lady Jasmine's portrait, and Lord Ashcroft reluctantly left it, passing down the gallery with Lady Egremont, looking at the faces of the murdered bride's descendants.

His guide gave the history of each original, showing that not one of the line had escaped the doom of

the race, that every male had died a violent death, and that every female had been the victim of suffering or wrong, or prolonged disease.

It was a relief to his lordship when they came to the pictures of the late earl and countess.

"The Lady Alexina resembles her father greatly," he said.

"Yes. Everyone remarks it. Her mother was fair, as you see, but Xina inherits the Egremont features and complexion. There is the picture of the present earl, and mine is beside him, and there is Alexina's at the end—the last of the race. This is the first time Egremont has ever been held by a woman, the estates and title heretofore always going to the eldest son. This was a peculiar case, however, and the estates and title have always been regarded as separate from each other, though held by the same person. My husband came from one of those earlier earls, and was but a distant relative of his immediate predecessor."

Lord Ashcroft thanked her ladyship for the information she had given him, and would have led the way back to the picture that had so fascinated him, but at that moment Lord Egremont joined them, and said:

"You have been listening to the story of the Lady Jasmine, I see, Lord Ashcroft. I have been telling it to the Lady Lorena, as I found she was somewhat at fault in regard to it. She had some of the incidents wrong, and other points she had quite forgotten. Are you pleased with the personal appearance of Alexina's ancestors?"

Lord Ashcroft replied by a compliment, and Lord Egremont then said:

"By the way, my lord, have you come to any decision in regard to that Kepp? I feel guilty in allowing him to remain free so long. He may be at this moment fleeing the country, as his father did before him. Every moment that your assailant remains at liberty seems like an age to me."

"I have not yet decided, my lord," answered Lord Ashcroft. "The truth is, I should like to see the man and have a talk with him before he is apprehended. I wish you would defer taking any step in the matter until I have seen Kepp."

The entire party raised their voices against this movement upon Lord Ashcroft's part, and the Lady Lorena implored her brother to remain at home; but his lordship put aside all objections skillfully, met his sister's pleadings with gentle railery, and won Lord Egremont's consent to await his interview with Kepp.

CHAPTER X.

Slender and passive, idle, restless, slow,
His home deserted for the lonely wood,
Tortured with a wound he could not know,
His life all deep grief, plunged in solitude.

Byron.

At the farther extremity of Egremont Wood, sheltered by overarching trees, stood the cottage occupied by Gosman Kepp and his mother. It was not an ornamental chalet, like the home of Donald Kay, for its position was less prominent, but it was, nevertheless, a pretty little home, and with many outward indications of a refinement scarcely to be expected from its inmates.

One side of the dwelling was thickly mantled with ivy, which half festooned a small projecting window, leaving only sufficient unnumbered space for the admission of air and light to the room within. A pretty little rustic porch graced the front of the cottage, and over it trailed a profusion of ivy vines, whose thickly clustering leaves upon its top served almost instead of shingles, and afforded ample protection to the seat beneath from the sunshine of summer and the rains of winter.

Within the cottage all was pleasantness and neatness. There were but three rooms, but they were all furnished in a style much superior to what might have been expected, judging from the position in life of the Kepps. The windows were all curtained, the floor of the sitting-room was carpeted and furnished with a chintz-covered couch, and the corners of the room had been fitted up with shelves upon which reposed a small collection of books.

In consequence of the refined look of his home and his fondness for books, Gosman Kepp had won from his fellows the sobriquet of "The scholar," and he was looked up to by men many years older, and was honoured among them as one of superior mental attainments. Yet it was also known that no youth among the tenantry of Egremont was flatter of foot or stronger of arm than he, that not a forester was more vigilant in the exercise of his duties, or could shoot more accurately at a target.

As he never showed by look or word a knowledge of his superiority over his fellows he was a great favourite among them, and the daughters of the miller and blacksmith and others would have given all their good looks and small dowries could they

have passed over the threshold of Kepp's cottage as its rightful mistress.

On the morning subsequent to the attempted assassination of Lord Ashcroft, and long before the family at Egremont had arisen from their beds, Dame Kepp was astir and bustling about in preparation of the morning meal. Breakfast was always served at an early hour in her household, but Gosman might have a fair start at his day's labour, but on this occasion it was later than usual, owing to the fact that the master of the house had neglected to light the fire, as was his usual custom.

"Poor boy!" soliloquized the good dame, with a glance at the door of her son's room, as she proceeded to put the coffee-pot over the cheery fire. "He hasn't seemed like himself for a day or two. I fear he is going to be ill!"

The dame was yet in her prime, a fair, portly woman, with smooth hair, light blue eyes, and a smiling mouth. Despite her smile she had a melancholy look, as though she had been much acquainted with sorrow. She had been, in her youth, a pretty, coquettish maiden, and it was through her coquetry that her sorrow had arisen.

The sitting-room was as bright and neat as hands could make it, and the dame's costume was equally tidy, and the table, with its dish of bacon and eggs, buttered toast, and hot coffee, was tempting enough for an epicure, when Mrs. Kepp proceeded to the door of Gosman's room and knocked loudly.

"Come, Gosman," she said, in the cheerful voice he loved to hear; "breakfast is all ready, you lazy fellow, and there's everything to do to-day. The storm last night has made plenty of work for the foresters this morning, you may depend."

There was no response to this remark, and the dame glanced at the old-fashioned clock, and smiled at her son's unusual tardiness.

"He has overslept himself," she said; "or, more likely, he is so busy with his book that he doesn't hear me."

With this impression she lifted the latch and softly opened the door of her son's room.

A hasty glance within assured her that he was not there.

"He must have got up early and gone forth into the forest," she thought. "I might have remembered that Gosman never puts aside his duties even for the pleasure of reading his books. He will be in soon!"

She brushed the already spotless hearth, and then set the breakfast down by the fire to keep hot while awaiting the coming of her son.

As it was not her nature to remain idle many minutes at a time she went into her son's room to put it in order for the day.

It was a pleasant room, that of Gosman Kepp, and contained a home-made book-case, which, though small, was well filled, a quantity of fishing-tackle, two or three guns laid across hooks at the top of the wall, two or three cheap but good prints in rustic frames made of cones and burs, and a few other evidences of simple and innocent tastes.

Such was the private chamber of the man suspected of being a midnight assassin.

A low, narrow bed, enclosed by white dimity curtains, stood in the farther corner, and the good housewife directed her steps to it, and drew aside the curtains.

The next moment she uttered a cry of astonishment.

The couch had not been occupied the preceding night.

"What can this mean?" cried the dame, as if she expected the empty bed to answer her question.

"Can Gosman have deserted me as his father did before him? Oh, heaven!"

The suspicion was too terrible to be harboured long.

Her son had always treated her with the utmost respect, and had felt for her a filial affection which could not be doubted. He had made her life happy, had supplied her with luxuries which she had never hoped to enjoy, and had never blamed her because his father had deserted her in his early childhood, nor returned to her since.

It could not be that Gosman had left her now.

Dismissing the involuntary thought, the dame mused:

"Oh, I see! He did not come in at all last night as I fancied he did. He was needed in the forest, and then, not liking to disturb me at a late hour, stayed all night at Kay's. He is probably having his breakfast there now, not thinking what an old goose I am making of myself here!"

She smiled through her tears, gave a loving touch to the unpressed pillow, and then returned to the other room.

"I think I'll wait a few minutes," she said, glancing at the clock. "Somehow I've got no appetite, and the lad may come home soon. He won't dislike

a cup of mother's coffee; even if he has been drinking some of Jessy's!"

So, seating herself at the corner of the hearth, the dame took up her knitting-work and waited, her thoughts dwelling fondly upon her son and Jessy Kay, whose future she wove together in one of those pleasant dreams common to mothers of every rank and nation.

The minutes slipped away unheeded, the fragrant aroma of the steaming coffee diffused itself upon the genial air, the toast and bacon acquired a hue of deeper brown, the great log in the fireplace blazed up brighter and brighter, but still the dame dreamed on, yet her son did not return.

At last she started, saw the hour, and decided to wait breakfast no longer, as Gosman probably did not intend to return home until dinner-time.

The table was neatly rearranged, everything in its place, and she was about to seat herself to her solitary meal, when a familiar step startled her, and her son entered the room.

There was a wild, strange look about him that alarmed her. His hair was rough, and hung in masses about his face, which was pale and haggard, as though he had passed a sleepless night, and his clothes were in a half-dry state, clinging to his form.

"What ails you, Gosman?" cried the dame. "Are you ill, or in trouble?"

"Don't worry me with questions, mother," he returned, wearily. "I am cold, wet and hungry. Give me something to eat!"

Mrs. Kepp would have questioned him farther, but there was something in the expression of his countenance that arrested the questions on her lips, and she obeyed his request in silence.

When she had filled his plate and poured out his coffee she ventured to express something of surprise and to make an effort to comprehend his conduct.

"I suppose you had breakfast at Kay's," she said, pleasantly, and not at all as if she had a thought beyond the remark. "I said to myself an hour ago, when I found you were not in your room, 'Gosman has gone over to Kay's and will stay to breakfast there, but he'll be home for a cup of mother's coffee, so if he don't.' Think I, even pretty Jessy Kay—"

"Don't, mother! I can't bear to hear you talk of her. I haven't been to the Kay's since yesterday, and I have had nothing to eat since last night. Another cup of coffee!"

Dame Kepp refilled his cup and exclaimed: "Not been to Kay's? Where then did you spend the night?"

"In the forest," was the moody response.

"In the forest, in all that storm!"

Her son nodded assent.

"What was there to be done, Gosman, that you had to be out at such an hour and in such weather?"

"Nothing. I had rather not talk, mother."

"But your actions are so strange, Gosman," said his mother, her eyes filling with tears and an apprehensive look coming over her face. "I don't know what to make of you. Have you quarrelled with Jessy? That girl is such a coquette I shouldn't wonder if she would drive you crazy. Yet how should I blame her?" added the dame, lowering her voice. "I drove my husband from me, when I was older than she, and should have had more wisdom!"

Gosman looked gloomily into his plate, his mother's allusion to her husband's desertion of her cutting him to the heart.

"Tell me have you quarrelled with Jessy, Gosman?"

"Yes, no. Her father won't let me have her because—because—"

"Because what?"

"Because of father's running away. I suppose he's afraid I'll serve Jessy in the same way, or thinks I come of a bad lot. Jessy loves me and will be true to me to the last!"

"That she will!" said the dame, soothingly.

"Jessy's a sort of Will o' the wisp, but she's got a true heart, after all, as I had if your father had but known it. Be patient and wait, Gosman, and it will come out all right in the end. You've got a little something laid by, and your situation here is sure, and you're certain to be head-forester after Donald Kay, and I can't see why he should let a matter that is dead and buried arise now. I will see him and have a talk with him. Cheer up, lad!"

"Your talk with Kay will do no good, mother," returned the under-forester, moodily. "If he would refuse Jessy's tears and pleadings he would never hearken to a neighbour!"

"But he owes me a kind turn, Gosman, for it was on account of Donald Kay your poor father was jealous. I used to smile on all the lads when I was a lass, and Donald had a fancy for me, but I refused him for Douglas Kepp. I married Douglas, and you were born, and Douglas thought everything of me. But somebody told him one day that Kay had once

loved me, and, as Kay was his most intimate friend and came here often, Douglas got jealous and finally ran away. I was a true wife to him, though, and some time he may know it," said the dame, hopefully. "But as Kay knows I was never to blame, I don't doubt he will give you his lass when I speak to him."

"It goes for nothing, my good reputation, and your blamelessness," said the young man, bitterly. "If I were only rich, Mr. Kay would gladly give me Jessy. It is enough to make a man commit a crime—what was I saying?" and he suddenly checked himself and glanced uneasily. "The truth is, mother, I'm going away from Egremont. You can have the furniture and books and money—all but enough to take me to Glasgow. I shall want no clothes but those I wear!"

"But where are you going, lad?" cried his bewildered parent. "What are you going to do?"

"I don't know," replied he, recklessly. "And I don't care! I'm sick of this state of things, and there are some reasons, which you know nothing of, which compel me to leave this place. I may go this very day. I'll step over and say good-bye to Jessy now."

He arose from the table, took his hat and went out, without another word to his frightened mother, or the slightest attention to his toilet.

The good woman indulged herself in a hearty burst of tears, and endeavoured to find some solution to Gosman's mysterious conduct.

"I never thought before that he was unsteady," she sobbed. "He has always gone and come like an old man for steadiness. This sudden flightiness is just like his father, and I am going to lose him just as I lost Douglas!"

Bitter as was her grief she arose and cleared her table and put the room in order with her usual methodical precision, and then took up her knitting. But her fingers did not work with their usual nimbleness, and her thoughts were in a tumult, in which one idea only was prominent, and that was that her son of whom she was so proud was about to become a wanderer as his father had been before him.

The hours wore on.

At length her forgotten knitting-work dropped from her lap, and she became absorbed in reflection—so absorbed that when a knock sounded upon her door she sprang up with a look of affright, as if it had been the sound of her son's departing footsteps.

Recovering herself, she went to the door and admitted Lord Ashcroft.

His lordship was alone, and the dame had never seen him, but she readily understood that he was the distinguished guest at Egremont, who had come as the suitor of the heiress, for so a neighbouring gossip had informed her on the previous day, and she welcomed him with a very deep courtesy and a manner of the deepest respect.

"Will you come in, my lord?" she asked, dusting her best chair with her apron, although it was already very clean. "Did your lordship walk from the great house?"

Lord Ashcroft accepted the chair placed for him, and regarded the pale face and red eyes of the little woman as he replied:

"Yes, I have walked from Egremont and would like to rest a few minutes by your pleasant fire. It's a long walk from the mansion."

"Yes, my lord, the forest is large. Would your lordship like a glass of new milk or some gooseberry wine, or shall I send for a horse for your lordship?"

"Neither, my good woman. Resume your work," and he glanced at her knitting. "Do not let my presence disturb you."

Thus enjoined and thinking "his lordship the sweetest-spoken person in the world," the dame reluctantly resumed her seat, took up her knitting, and commenced work.

"You have a pleasant home here," remarked Lord Ashcroft, carelessly, his gaze taking in the books, pictures, and other refinements of the apartment. "Do you read much?"

"No, my lord. 'Tis but little I know about books, but Gosman, my son, my lord, is a scholar, and he reads all them things in the corner, beside other books he's got in his room. He knows a great deal, more's the pity," and the good woman's voice trembled with a remembrance of the sorrow she had momentarily forgotten.

"Why is it a pity?" inquired Lord Ashcroft, with that unflinching courtesy and gentleness which stamped him everywhere as a gentleman in the highest sense of the term. "Does he study too much and neglect his work?"

"No, my lord. He never neglects his duties, though I say it as shouldn't, and he breaks right off in the most interesting book sometimes to work in the forest. Only last week when he was reading a history, and he had come to a part where the man that wrote the history found an Indian he named

Friday, he laid it right down because he was needed to do something, though it was evening too. It was Mr. Crusoe's history," she added. "I meant it was a pity because learning ain't for people like us. It has made him strange and discontented."

"Indeed!"

"Yes, my lord," declared the dame, with inward delight at his lordship's apparent interest in her son, and a wild hope springing up in her heart that he might do something for Gosman, or at least bring about her son's marriage with Jessy Kay. "He hasn't seemed at all like himself for a day or two, and this morning he actually frightened me with his strange actions."

"How so?" questioned Lord Ashcroft.

"Why, my lord, he was out in the storm last night, and never came home at all. His bed hadn't been slept in, and when he came in he looked as though he hadn't slept a wink, poor lad."

Unconscious that her words were likely to fasten a horrible crime upon her son, and imagining that she was enlisting her noble visitor's sympathies in Gosman, the dame described the young man's wild appearance that morning, his unusual roughness of manner, and his repeated desire that she should cease to annoy him with questions.

Lord Ashcroft could not fail to interpret her words to Gosman's disadvantage.

"Then you do not know where he spent the night?" he asked.

"No, my lord, and no more does anyone else, poor lad. And he's going away to-day, my lord, to Glasgow, to ship for some place on the other side of the world. He has gone now to say the last word to Jessy. Poor fellow! he's that wrought up, my lord, that he said he could almost commit a crime, though, of course, he didn't mean it."

"But what can be the cause of his trouble?"

"I don't know, unless it's want of money, my lord. Donald Kay says he shall not have Jessy, and Gosman says if he had money Kay would consent directly."

Here, then, thought Ashcroft, was motive enough for the robbery.

Could there be another motive for the attempted assassination?

But no other motive was revealed by the garrulous dame, who prattled away of her son, his talents, his ambition to be head-forester some day, his love for Jessy, the disapproval of Donald Kay, and various *et ceteras* that went far to confirm the visitor's suspicions of Kepp's guilt.

The result of her remarks was to induce in Lord Ashcroft a belief that Kepp was partially demented, and he resolved to seek him out and hold a personal interview with him before returning to Egremont.

He expressed his regret at the unfortunate mental state of the under-forester, and the dame, delighted at his condescension, summoned all her courage and begged him to do something for her son.

"If your lordship only would," she said, prayerfully. "I cannot bear to lose him so—to have him go away and leave me husbandless and childless. Oh, my lord, if you would only get him to stay here. A word from your lordship would make Donald Kay consent to the marriage, and then everything would be all right."

"I will see your son," he replied, kindly, pitying the unsuspecting woman, who reposed such confidence in his power and goodness.

"Thank you, my lord, thank you a thousand times. I know now that everything will be well," said the dame, with a hopeful look.

Lord Ashcroft longed to tell the simple creature of the perilous position in which her son was placed, and to prepare her for the fate that must overtake him, but he could not bear to change her suddenly conceived hope to awful grief.

Besides, there was still a doubt in Gosman's favour.

The knife might prove not to have been his.

His lordship had brought the weapon with him, but he hesitated to produce it and put the question to the woman if it were her own.

The doubt influenced him to the act, at length, and he carelessly drew out the knife and laid it upon the table at a moment when Grace Kepp's face was averted.

It was not long before her wandering gaze discovered it.

"Why, where did that come from?" she exclaimed, in surprise, taking it up. "Did your lordship bring it in?"

"Yes, I found it. Have you ever seen it before?"

"Seen it before, my lord?" smiled the dame. "I should think I had. I had the knife when I first began housekeeping."

"Are you sure of it?"

"Yes, my lord. There's the very crack in the handle I remember so well. I suppose your lordship picked it up in the forest. I never knew Gos-

man so careless before. He took the knife a month ago to use somewhere, and lost it. I've asked him for it a dozen times, but he never could find it. It's been well sharpened, I see!"

She laid the instrument down, smilingly unconscious that her words had sealed the fate of her unhappy son.

Lord Ashcroft had a guilty feeling as if he had treacherously caused the mother to condemn her son, and mentally resolved that her words should never be repeated by him.

Such unconscious confidence as hers should be held sacred and inviolate.

"As I found it I'll keep it for the present," he said, taking it up from the table. "I think I will now go in search of your son."

"Your lordship will do all you can for him, will you not, my lord?" cried the dame, anxiously.

"I will do all I can for him," answered Lord Ashcroft, solemnly, as he arose from his seat, "but there is one higher than any mortal to whom you should plead for your son!"

With these words, uttered in a tone that struck the woman with a deadly fear, Lord Ashcroft quitted the cottage, secreting the knife on his person as he lingered a moment in the porch, and set out for the chalet of Donald Kay.

He struck into a narrow wood-path instead of the wide avenue, and walked slowly along, wishing and hoping that Kepp had already fled the country, and wondering over the mystery of the attempted assassination.

But his wishes and hopes were alike vain, for as he came nearer to the centre of the forest, where Kay's cottage was situated he heard the sound of sobbing. He paused and looked around him, beholding in a sheltered glade at no great distance, prostrate upon the ground, the form of the suspected under-forester, Gosman Kepp!

(To be continued.)

JERUSALEM.—Jerusalem is still, in some respects, the City of the Jews. It is found that there are 7,000 Jewish inhabitants, 5,000 Mahometans, and 3,400 Christians in the place.

THE SCOTTISH VOLUNTEER REVIEW.—We are informed on good authority that the Scottish Volunteer Review and sham fight for 1867 will take place in the month of July or August, on the farm of Fallburn, near Thankerton Station, in the Upper Ward of Lanarkshire. The ground has been recently inspected by Colonel Bulwer, Major Hosier and others, and found to be admirably adapted for such a gathering. Spectators will get a fine view from the gentle slopes of Tinto, at the base of which lies the ground selected for the great demonstration.

ADULTERATED TOBACCO.—Among the samples of adulterated tobacco examined lately at the Inland Revenue Laboratory were several containing liquorice, others fermented sugar, and some tannic acid, sulphate of iron, and logwood; whilst one sample of "roll" sent from Scotland actually consisted of oakum, covered with a thin wrapper of leaf tobacco, and was, from its outward appearance, indistinguishable from genuine tobacco. The principal of the laboratory gives the weight of tobacco yearly consumed per head of the population at 1 lb. 4½ oz., which shows a continuous increase during the last twenty years.

DESTRUCTION OF WAKE'S OAK, STONY STRATFORD.—We learn with regret that one of the finest old oaks in England has come to the pitiable end of being burnt down by a party of mischievous schoolboys. This tree stood in Whitteewood Forest, in the vicinity of the Duke of Grafton's seat, Wakefield Lodge. Its name, age, and situation made it extremely probable that it existed when Wac or Wake the Saxon possessed the domain. The tree was much valued by the people of the neighbourhood, and seemed likely to flourish for many a generation yet to come, although the trunk was hollow. A fire had been lighted inside, which completely dried up and set fire to the tree, and brought it down before the Duke's fire-engine could extinguish the flames.

LONGEVITY OF MAN.—It is proved by statistics that a man's longevity is in exact proportion to his educational attainments, provided his health has not been injured by over-mental exertion. It seems that increasing intelligence and decreasing war have prolonged the average length of life in Europe from twenty-five years in the seventeenth century to thirty-five in the eighteenth century and forty-five in the nineteenth. The best-educated communities are the longest lived, and the best-educated soldiers live amazingly longer than the more ignorant, and seem to wear a charmed life, not so much against bullet and bayonet as against the effects of disease, privation, and even severe wounds on their constitutions and lives.



THE WATER-WOLF.

CHAPTER XIII.

"HERE we are," said the baronet, in his cheery tones, as he wiped his wet brow, "and we have settled an important question—namely, that I am a better oarsman than our nautical friend Cottle."

"But you must be extremely tired?"

"Not particularly so," answered Sir Arthur as he resumed his way shorewards. "Were it not for you, and for the necessity of taking you to your father, I should be tempted to push off and take that man into custody while his strength is exhausted. He is desperate, however, and might upset our boats in the struggle. In that case the sharks would take us."

"The sharks?" echoed Amy.

"Yes, the sharks. The waters around all these islands are full of them. A man dropped overboard anywhere here would be snapped up in about one-sixteenth of a second. But we are now within sight of the wharfs, and we will take our leave of the sharks and of Cottle. What gladness to think that we are so near your father."

At that hour, as Amy had said, the great mass of the Bermudians had retired to their slumbers. Quiet reigned on the islands. Lights gleamed here and there, but only in a few aristocratic or afflicted houses.

Notwithstanding this quiet, however, there was in certain districts, and particularly at St. George's, a subdued life and bustle. The police was active. Armed guards were in motion. Men came and went mysteriously. Bodies of soldiers, mere squads, under a corporal or sergeant, were moving watchfully to and fro—some in boats, and some well mounted on the beaches; while single sentries, grim and determined, were standing in sundry dark corners.

The strange and recent disappearance of Mr. Hilton, as stated by Sir Charles Mayne to Harold, had produced an increased terror and vigilance throughout the islands, regarding the terrible scourge by which they had so sorely been afflicted.

As his boat neared the shore Sir Arthur became aware of an unusual vigilance and excitement, by seeing various figures moving stealthily about the wharfs, and by hearing sundry sounds, which betrayed the movements of armed men.

Suddenly, as the boat neared the wharf to which the baronet had shaped his course, a police-cutter

shot out from its concealment, and swept down upon the new comers with the air of a spider rushing upon its prey, while a stern voice shouted:

"Who goes there?"

"The friends expected by Sir Charles Mayne," replied Sir Arthur.

The response was as promptly effective as a stick thrust into a beehive. There was an instant and general buzzing from half a dozen voices as the cutter advanced. This buzzing ceased only when the two boats were alongside of each other.

"The judge's daughter?" continued the voice which had challenged the couple.

Sir Arthur replied affirmatively, and the buzzing was succeeded by a loud and prolonged cheer.

"Capital! Mr. Mayne has put us on the look-out for the young lady," proceeded the officer in charge of the cutter, as the two boats rowed towards the wharf. "We have a carriage in waiting, all ready. Mr. Mayne was sure that the young lady would arrive during the night, and here you are, sure enough! Permit me to lead the way, sir," and he touched his cap to Sir Arthur, "and you shall soon be at the residence of Sir Charles, where the judge is waiting."

The boats reached the wharf at this instant, and in another minute Amy and Sir Arthur were being whirled swiftly away towards Mayne Manor.

At that hour Sir Charles Mayne and his guest were seated in the library of the family mansion, with suspended breathing, listening.

"I hear nothing," said the baronet.

"Nor I," said the judge, with a sigh. "We were mistaken in thinking we did. We are too nervous—too excited," and he endeavoured to smile. "The very rustling of the wind startles me, but I think that the poor child is coming."

"She will soon be here, I am sure," said Sir Charles, with forced calmness. "There can be no mistake about Harold's theory. She was taken from the raft by some passing vessel. The commander of that vessel, on hearing her story, has hastened to bring her to us. Harold—"

At this moment Harold entered cautiously, to avoid disturbing his mother, who had retired to her slumbers in ignorance of the exciting hopes and fears by which the other members of the family were stirred and shaken.

"No news of Amy yet," he said, without waiting to be questioned. "I have sent messengers to all the ports, informed the police-cutters, taken every possible measure. The second boat has arrived, bringing safely all who were in it. The commander desires me to say that Sir Arthur Aldene is among

the number, and that Sir Arthur will pass the night on St. David's, where he has relatives."

"All this is good news so far as it goes," said Sir Charles. "We must continue to be hopeful."

"Yes, yes," responded the judge, struggling with the anxieties that shook him. "It is encouraging truly to know that Sir Arthur and the rest of our late companions are safe. We will continue to wait hopefully. A few hours must bring us the desired tidings. In the meantime, my dear Sir Charles, let me ask you a few questions. First, do you know a fisherman named Gunnel, John Gunnel?"

"Gunnel?" repeated the baronet. "I did know such a man a few years ago. He has been dead four or five years."

He then related the occurrence which had prompted the question, and Sir Charles and Harold agreed with him that the action of the unknown, in thus taking the name of a dead man, was at once mysterious and sinister.

"There could be of course another John Gunnel," declared Sir Charles, "but there is none other known to us, and still less one whose wife and daughters do sewing for Lady Mayne. The whole affair is full of mystery if not of wickedness. Perhaps—"

A carriage was heard approaching. It had already passed the gates and was hurrying up the broad avenue to the principal door of the mansion. Harold's face lighted up vividly.

"I left a carriage in waiting!" he cried. "Good news! good news! Amy has come!"

All hastened to the door as the carriage came rolling up in front of it, and Sir Arthur and Amy alighted from it.

"My child! my child!" exclaimed the judge as he clasped the maiden to his breast. "Thank heaven, thank heaven!"

It was a full minute before he could say another word or Amy respond to him, and by this time Harold had dismissed the carriage.

"Come in, come in," said Sir Charles, wiping his eyes vigorously.

"Sir Arthur, as true as I live!" continued the judge, at length turning to the young baronet and extending a hand to him. "A thousand welcomes! I am delighted to see you again!"

While he was speaking the entire party had entered the large hall, and Harold had closed the door.

"Permit me, my dear Sir Charles," resumed the judge, "to introduce my daughter to you. Amy, my dear friend Sir Charles. He will give you a father's welcome."

The worthy baronet did justice to the declaration, for he was already charmed by his proposed daughter-in-law, and saluted her most heartily.

"Further, my dear Sir Charles," continued the judge, in a glow of joy, "permit me to present to you Sir Arthur Aldene, the only son of the late Sir Beverly Aldene, whom we both know long years ago. Sir Arthur, Sir Charles Mayne, so well known to you already by reputation, and by our frequent conversations on the Sea-Bird."

The two baronets shook hands warmly.

"And Harold, where's Harold?" continued the judge, warming with the occasion, and rubbing his hands together delightedly. "Here, my dear boy, is our darling, and here, Amy—just look at this handsome young gentleman. Your heart has told you already, no doubt, that he is Harold."

The young couple saluted each other in a manner that looked rather formal to their excited parents, and Sir Charles left the way to his library, where they were all promptly seated.

"We knew of your rescue," exclaimed Sir Charles, addressing himself to Amy. "Harold discovered your rescue by some passing ship. We have been expecting you every minute for the last three hours. Your father found the empty raft, and we were in great distress till Harold gave us the explanation. Ha, ha, my dear judge," and he put his finger into the waistcoat of his old friend, "confess that it takes love to sharpen a man's perceptions. The dear boy guessed the whole matter in a second—the passing ship, the return, the whole history."

"But I was not rescued by a passing ship, Sir Charles," said Amy, who saw that the baronet was labouring under a mistake. "I came ashore on the raft."

"On the raft?" said the judge. "That was my first supposition. Proceed, dear, and tell us all about it."

"I was insensible when the raft reached St. David's," narrated Amy. "A fisherman came and released me from the raft, and took me to the well-known cavern—"

"What sort of a fisherman?" interrupted the judge, starting. "Describe him."

Amy did so.

"The very man! that pretended to be Gunnel!" exclaimed the judge, excitedly. "I understand his conduct now! At the very moment he was pretending to assist me in looking for you he had you shut up in that cavern!"

"A little while before nightfall," resumed Amy, "and just as we were about to start for St. George's I suddenly fainted—"

"She was drugged, doubtless," interposed Sir Arthur. "The pretended fisherman, who called himself Cuttle, offered her some wine."

"Drugged?" exclaimed the judge and Sir Charles, with a startled air.

"It seems so," said Amy. "I had no suspicions at the time, but everything assures me that the wine was poisoned: I fainted, therefore, and the pretended fisherman took me to a second cavern, an inner one, which is reached by a secret entrance, and which, Sir Arthur says, is utterly unknown to the inhabitants of these islands."

"Do you know of any such secret cave, Harold?" asked Sir Charles.

"No, father. I never heard a word about it."

"Continue, dear," said the judge, breathlessly.

"In this secret cave," proceeded Amy, "I suddenly awoke by falling from the couch on which Cuttle had placed me—"

"The couch?" interrupted the judge.

"Oh, the place was fitted up with a couch to sleep upon, boxes, chests, barrels, wood, and everything needful in a habitation. It seems that this pretended fisherman has been living there in secret. I awoke, therefore, looked around for the entrance, and could not find it. I then heard a strange cry, and was soon attacked by—oh, such a horrible monster! Sir Arthur saw it also, and will describe it!"

Sir Arthur complied with this suggestion. The horror of the listeners was intense.

"The Water-Wolf!" they cried in chorus at the first pause in Sir Arthur's description.

"And the brave girl beat him off, drove him away, with a brand from the fire that Cuttle had kindled!" added Sir Arthur. "The monster retreated into a deep, pit-like chasm by which it had evidently entered."

"And just then," continued Amy, "Sir Arthur entered the cave, and—the rest is easy to imagine."

"But how did Sir Arthur know of the existence of this secret cavern?" asked Sir Charles.

"That is his secret," replied Amy. "I have not asked him. Perhaps he'll tell us at his leisure."

Sir Arthur nodded affirmatively.

"For the present," concluded Amy, "it is enough for us to know that Sir Arthur was there, that he rescued me from the power of that wicked man, and

that he has conducted me safely to St. George's, notwithstanding that we were pursued nearly to the port by the pretended fisherman."

Sir Arthur added a few words of explanation about this pursuit.

"It is to you, then, Sir Arthur," observed the judge, turning to the young baronet, "that we are indebted for Amy's rescue?"

"To him alone, dear father," declared the maiden, emphatically.

The judge expressed his thanks to Sir Arthur with heartfelt earnestness.

"It seems, then, after all," said Sir Charles, with an air of disappointment, "that there was no truth whatever in Harold's theory."

"Not the least, father," responded Harold, with a secret delight at the fervour of Amy's gratitude to the young baronet. "Sir Arthur alone must have the credit of restoring Amy to us."

"In that case," said Sir Charles, "let me also hasten to thank you, Sir Arthur, for the service you have rendered my family, as well as the judge's. You are probably aware, by this time, that Amy and Harold have long been betrothed to each other, and this fact will at once enable you to understand how deeply I appreciate the said service."

Sir Arthur started as if mortally wounded at this announcement of the proposed union, for it was the first intimation he had received of it.

"Thank him, my son," added Sir Charles, turning to Harold. "Let Sir Arthur know how deeply you feel the kindness he has rendered us in rescuing your betrothed wife from her terrible peril."

Deeply and painfully excited, Harold stammered a few words to the effect indicated by his father, while Amy became deathly pale and shook with keen anguish.

Despite all his self-control, Sir Arthur could not conceal the shock given him by the words of Sir Charles to his son. Until that moment he had taken it for granted that Amy was as free as the air, and therefore had not put any restraint upon the affection with which she had inspired him since their departure from England.

"No thanks are needed, my friend," said he, in a troubled voice, as he arose to his feet; "I happened to be there on business of my own, and have only fulfilled a simple duty. As the hour is becoming late I will take my departure."

"Most assuredly not," interrupted Sir Charles, coming forward.

"Unless you have promised your relatives to return to-night—"

"My relatives?" repeated the young baronet.

"Certainly. The captain sent us word of your safety, and said that you would pass the night at St. David's."

Sir Arthur smiled sadly, and replied:

"He must have forgotten what I said to him, or mistaken my meaning. I haven't a relative in the world. I merely told the commander that I had by writing only some acquaintance with St. David's Island. The captain's report of me is evidently as shattered as his ship."

"In this case, then," declared Sir Charles, with a hearty hospitality, "I shall insist on your remaining with us. I was intimately acquainted with your esteemed father, and shall have much pleasure in entertaining you during your stay at the islands. Do not refuse us, my dear Sir Arthur, especially after all we owe you, for we cannot think of your going to the hotel among strangers."

"So be it, then, with many thanks," rejoined the young baronet as he encountered a glance from the brightening eyes of Amy. "I shall be most proud and happy to accept of the hospitality you offer me, Sir Charles, and to become acquainted with your family."

"From this hour, then, my dear Sir Arthur," said Sir Charles, "make yourself at home with us. Harold will be delighted with your society, and I hope to see you and he become as great friends as your father and I used to be."

We need not linger over the installation of the guests at Mayne Manor. In half an hour all the arrangements for the night were completed. Lady Mayne was gently awakened to hear the good news, the housekeeper took charge of Amy, as Harold did of Sir Arthur, refreshments were had, and Sir Charles and the judge became very happy. To Amy, however, as to Harold and Sir Arthur, the night was full of darkness and troubles.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE morning subsequent to the events related in the preceding chapters dawned in beauty upon the islands. The soft summer air swept up from the sea, bringing with it a balmy freshness, and the sun beamed in unclouded splendour, producing music from the birds and fragrance from the flowers.

The breakfast-room at the Mayne manor-house presented, at a late hour on that morning, a pleasant and animated scene.

It was a wide and high apartment, with long windows opening into a flower-garden, which was handsomely laid out, with a fountain in its centre. The room itself was furnished with exquisite taste, the furniture being of a pale, light-coloured wood, and the carpets looking like wood-moss strewn with wild violets. Handsome engravings, and one or two good paintings, adorned the walls, giving an air of refinement and luxury to the scene.

The breakfast-table, covered with snowy damask, displayed a wealth of delicate China, sparkling crystal, and silver, and was laden with a host of dainty edibles which evinced the hospitality of the master of the domain, and the capabilities of his cook.

At the head of the table sat Sir Charles Mayne, his fine ruddy face beaming with joy and satisfaction upon his guests, and opposite him sat his lovely invalid wife, a faint flush of pleased excitement on her delicate cheeks, and a peaceful, happy light in her eyes.

At her right hand was seated Mr. Justice Cranstoun, his pale thin countenance lighted up by a pleasant glow, that looked as though it might be the forerunner of the perfect health which he hoped to obtain during his visit to his friends.

Amy Cranstoun sat at the right of her host, and opposite her was placed Sir Arthur Aldene, Harold Mayne being at the left of his mother, whom he delighted to wait upon.

There was a faint, almost imperceptible shadow on the brows of the three younger members of the party, and it might have been noticed that they were strangely silent, had not the pleasant conversation and occasional laughter of the older gentlemen served as a screen to their quietness.

Yet Lady Mayne, whose delicate spirit was a sort of mental barometer, detected that the young people were not happy, and she was not slow to divine the cause.

She noticed that Amy rather avoided the gaze of her young rescuer, and that when by chance she encountered it, she blushed vividly, and then grew very pale. She noticed, too, that Sir Arthur looked sad and worn, as if with some mental conflict rather than from the danger through which he had lately passed. She missed her son's usually lively remarks at the breakfast-table, and comprehended that his rather formal manner was the result of heart-suffering.

"Poor children!" she thought, in gentle pity. "I am so sorry for them. Yet I do not see how I can help them. They are at cross purposes with their fathers, and heaven only knows what will be the result. It seems to me to be my duty to foster an interest between Miss Cranstoun and Harry, and to soothe, and divert this handsome young baronet."

To think anything a duty was, with Lady Mayne, to do it, and when the young people arose from the table, and the older gentlemen retreated to the wide front veranda to converse, Lady Mayne turned around, with a winning smile, and said:

"Sir Arthur, I should like to know you better, for I am familiar with your name. There was a Sir Arthur Aldene, who was once Governor of the Bermudas—I think it was more than a century ago."

"He was my ancestor," responded the young baronet, with a smile. "He was a famous buccannier in his day, and took many Spanish ships and their treasures. Buccanniering was very respectable in those times, and that Sir Arthur was knighted and made governor of these islands."

"So you are his lineal descendant," said his hostess. "I have read of many brave and noble deeds that he did. He was said to be as fierce as a hawk and as gentle as a dove—the first to his enemies and the second to his friends. If you will be kind enough to wheel my chair out upon the veranda, I shall delight to relate to you some of the many strange stories I have heard which will illustrate both sides of his character."

Delighted to be of service to the lovely invalid, and interested in her promised recitals, the young baronet gently wheeled her chair to the veranda and placed it in a corner at a little distance from the two old gentlemen who were absorbed in recollections of their college days.

They were not so absorbed, however, but that the Ex-governor directed an affectionate look upon his wife, who smiled pleasantly in acknowledgment of it.

The end of the veranda chosen by Sir Arthur Aldene was enclosed by a lattice wreathed with clustering roses, Virginia-creeper, and other blossoming vines, and the air was laden with the perfume of the flowers that depended from them.

"Sit down beside me, Sir Arthur," said the lady,

pointing to an open-work bamboo chair near at hand.

The young gentleman drew the seat nearer to her, and took possession of it, awaiting with pleasure her proposed communications.

While he was thus engaged the entertaining of Amy Cranston had fallen upon Harold Mayne, and uncertain what to do to please the rather silent maiden, he proposed a ramble through the garden.

"I should like that above all things," exclaimed Amy, who had been longing to wander through the bower-like shades of the adjacent shrubbery.

Harold conducted her into the wide hall that ran through the dwelling, and took from a gilded nail a wide-brimmed hat, edged with real lace, and decorated with narrow white ribbons.

"This belongs to my mother," he explained. "She wears it when we wheel her chair over the lawn. She desired me to offer it to you for your use until you should have ordered something of the kind from the milliner's."

Amy accepted the kindness with thanks, placing it on her head, and as her pretty blushing face was seen through the half veil, Harold Mayne could not help acknowledging her rare beauty.

But the recognition of her charms was not the result of a tender awakening for her.

He was simply rendering her justice. He conducted her down the veranda steps, their movements followed by the sorrowing gaze of Sir Arthur Aldene and by the admiring glances of the two fathers, who then exchanged looks of self-congratulation.

"What a splendid young couple they would make!" declared the judge, delightedly.

"Heaven grant they may fall in love with each other!" responded the Ex-governor, sighing.

Unconscious of the interest excited by them, the young couple wandered over the lawn and into the well-grown shrubbery at one side, which presented a fragrant and cool retreat from the heat of the morning.

Harold had said but little, only pausing once or twice to point out the charming view, and she had been even more taciturn, replying simply by ejaculations of admiration.

But when they had gained a lovely secluded spot in the cedar wood, where a rustic bench had been placed for the benefit of strollers in that direction, Harold aroused himself from his abstraction.

"Let us sit down here, Miss Cranston," he said. "I should like to converse with you."

Amy bowed gravely, with increasing pallor, and took the designated seat.

The young gentleman also sat down, but at the opposite extremity of the bench.

"Miss Cranston," he then said, with an effort, and yet in the simple, straightforward manner that characterized him, "I have something upon my mind that concerns your whole future life and mine, and it seems to me I had better speak frankly."

"Certainly," said Amy, unhesitatingly, moving her small foot uneasily on the ground.

"You are aware, Miss Amy, that our fathers were college friends, and that they loved each other as brothers. You are also aware that out of the fulness of that love they contracted with each other that their children should marry, thus uniting the two families."

"I am aware of it."

"Allow me to say, Miss Amy, without any disrespect to you, that I think our parents decidedly unjust in thus bargaining away the lives of responsible beings."

"I agree with you, Mr. Mayne," said Amy, decidedly.

"You do?"

Amy bowed silently.

"And I want to say to you," continued Harold, "that I had disposed of my heart before seeing you." A bright blush shot up into Amy's cheeks, and she said, quietly:

"Mr. Mayne, you simply forestall a similar communication which I was about to make to you."

Harold regarded her a moment, and then said:

"Of course, then, Amy, I cannot marry you, nor ask you to become my wife."

"Of course, then, Mr. Mayne," she responded, "I cannot marry you, nor accept any offer of marriage from you."

The young man was surprised; then his lip quivered, and he gave utterance to a hearty peal of laughter, in which mingled the softer tones of Amy. Then they looked at each other, and laughed again.

"It's so odd," declared Amy, the first to speak. "When we sat down here I resolved to tell you that there was no use in your falling in love with me, for that I preferred somebody else. Isn't it ludicrous?"

"Certainly," said Harold, relieved and overjoyed

beyond measure. "We will be friends, Amy, not lovers?"

"Oh, yes!" she answered, extending her hand frankly.

Harold drew nearer to her, pressed her hand, and continued to sit close beside her.

He comprehended clearly that she had given her heart to the handsome young baronet who had rescued her from such terrible peril, and he said, confidentially:

"I love the dearest little girl in all the world. Of course I cannot tell you all about her now, while you are not yet rested from your shipwreck, but in the course of time I shall not only be glad to tell you of her, but to introduce you to each other. I know you will become friends."

"I don't doubt it. Do your parents like her?" Harold's brow clouded.

"They do not even know of her existence," he answered. "Knowing how my father's heart has been set upon my marriage with you, I have never ventured to tell him the truth. And I could not burden my mother with the knowledge of my unhappiness. Perhaps you know something of my father's character. He is the most noble, most generous of men, and yet so proud of his birth and family that I believe he would disown me if he fancied that I sought to marry a young lady of inferior social station."

"The one you love then is not socially your equal?"

"Not socially, but in other respects she is my superior," said Harold, with a lover's humility and a lover's ardour. "She is so beautiful, so innocent, so intellectual, so well educated, so—but I cannot describe her. I believe her to be an angel. But with regard to my father, his pride is his only fault, and that is a fearfully obstinate one."

"It is so also with papa," said Amy.

"But your father's pride cannot interfere with your happiness. You do not love one of inferior rank."

Amy blushed, and answered:

"Papa is determined that I shall marry you. I suppose you know that I am wealthy. Papa is dreadfully afraid that some fortune-hunter will run away with me, and he has repeatedly declared that he shall not be at ease until I am your wife."

"Would not Sir Arthur satisfy him?"

The maiden dropped her head as she replied: "Sir Arthur is poor. I suppose papa, well as he likes Sir Arthur, would consider him a fortune-hunter if he asked for my hand. No; my father will be satisfied with no one but you for a son-in-law, not even a Croisade."

"And my father will be satisfied with no one but you for a daughter-in-law, not even a Queen of Sheba."

Both smiled, and then looked grave.

"Such being the case, Amy," remarked Harold, gloomily, "what are we to do? Inmate ourselves upon the altar of filial duty?"

The maiden was silent.

"If our parents were not the best in the world," continued the youth, "we should know what to do. But I can never bring a shadow of grief to my mother's eyes; I can never give my father reason to reproach me. I am their only child, and I will not plant their pillow with thorns."

"I am all papa has to love," said Amy, "and I will never go contrary to his wishes."

"What, then, are we to do?"

The question appeared unanswerable.

After a brief period of thought the young man said:

"We had better let matters remain as they are at present. Something may occur to assist our cause. Certainly, to urge our opposition will bring on the evils we desire to avert. Let us be wise, Amy, and proceed cautiously."

"We have need for wisdom," sighed the maiden.

"Yes, when the happiness of so many is at stake. We understand each other fully, I trust, and that is the first and most necessary step. Last evening, when my father spoke of our union, I told him I would propose to you and abide by your decision. I meant to tell you that I loved another, confiding in your generosity for release from our compulsory bonds; but I did not dream that I was to be met with a similar confession."

"Frankness is the only course open to me. I presume I should have cherished my secret in my own heart, as girls generally do, if I could have done so with justice to you, another and myself. We are leagued together then, Harold, to try every means by which to secure our own happiness?"

"Yes," declared Harold, looking into her clear and now happy eyes with vision as tranquil as her own.

"My anxieties were all for nothing," said the young girl. "I will confess to you now that I have been miserable—as miserable as you can possibly

have been. But since the great stumbling-block has been removed I have faith to believe that the end will be what we desire."

Harold entertained doubts, but did not urge them at the moment. He saw difficulties in the very affection entertained for each other by the judge and the Ex-governor—difficulties in the suspiciousness of fortune-hunters by Amy's father, and in the pride of his own. And he did not clearly see how those difficulties were to be surmounted without bringing a terrible sorrow upon everyone concerned.

"We have settled the preliminaries, Amy," he said, "and we must now wait in patience. Shall we continue our walk?"

The maiden arose and took his now proffered arm, and they continued their ramble, engaging in earnest conversation. An hour had passed when they returned to the hall, and as they came up the lawn, arm in arm, Amy smiling and Harold bending his head down to her in conversation, Sir Arthur Aldene turned deathly pale and fear took possession of his mind. He did not notice the puzzled look on the sweet face of Lady Mayne, nor notice how Sir Charles's face beamed with exulting satisfaction as he thrust his round forefinger into the waistcoat of the smiling judge, whispering:

"You see it is coming out all right, Cranston, as I thought it would. Our children are pleased with each other, and it won't be many days before my Harry will come to you begging to hasten the wedding. I declare, I feel like a boy again."

(To be continued.)

ARABELLA.

ARABELLA STAPLES did a very foolish thing when she allowed Mr. Hannibal Thistleton to wait upon her at all. First, Hannibal Thistleton called at Mr. Staples's residence on business—to attend to some repairs upon a pianoforte—and after that he came to give one of the younger Staples lessons in music. Mr. Thistleton was a very fair musician, and came well recommended, both as to ability and moral character, and after due trial it was decided that he was fully competent to teach; and Arabella took it into her head that she would go over some of her old lessons under his guidance.

Hannibal Thistleton was not far from five-and-twenty years of age, of medium height, rather slight in frame, and of faultless proportions. In complexion he was slightly dark, with something of the Italian cast of countenance; his eyes were large and black; his hair was black, and worn long, flowing gracefully over his shoulders; the only beard he wore was a very fine moustache; and his wide shirt-collar, of spotless white, was confined at the throat by a narrow black ribbon, and turned down over the collar of his vest. Mr. Thistleton was an enthusiast. Music was his hobby, and he went into the highest kind of raptures over it whenever he found anyone to listen.

Arabella Staples was only eighteen; a happy, joyous, laughter-loving creature, making summer of all the months in the year, and plucking the flowers of pleasure whenever they came in her way; and though she meant to be very careful and circumspect yet she often got her fingers pricked by thorns which she had not counted upon in her thoughtlessness. It is not to be wondered at that Arabella liked the society of Hannibal Thistleton. He pleased her; and she, in her innocence of experience in such matters, received his rhapsodies upon Music and the Old Masters as the scintillations of a brilliant intellect. He pressed his hand upon his heart when he talked, and there were times when the tears fairly stood in his eyes in view of the degeneracy of the present age upon the subject of music.

By-and-by Mr. Thistleton invited Arabella to attend a lecture with him; and then he accompanied her to a concert. After this he procured tickets for the opera, and she accompanied him to hear an Italian troupe. Arabella had attended the opera before in company with her brother; but she had never enjoyed it as she enjoyed it now, for Mr. Thistleton was able to explain to her much that she did not understand, and consequently the music had new interest for her.

The brother of whom I have spoken was elder than Arabella—and now away at sea, having gone out, a few weeks before Mr. Thistleton made his appearance, as second mate of a stanch East India-man.

Several times Arabella allowed the music-teacher to escort her to the opera. In time Mr. Thistleton became not only very attentive but he took it upon himself to drop in frequently when he had no professional business, on which occasions he sometimes

brought little presents for Arabella, and occasionally he bestowed trifling gifts upon the younger children.

And thus things went on for a whole year, at the end of which time it was a foregone conclusion on all hands that Hannibal and Arabella were to be man and wife at no very distant day. Thus far the maiden had liked the gentleman, and had enjoyed his companionship; and she had allowed him to talk to her of love, and in turn she had talked of the same subject.

By-and-by Arabella began to discover that there were things in Mr. Thistleton which she did not like—which she could not like. She began to discover that there was no real force in his character—that his enthusiasm upon the subject of music was an art, and that his poetical taste was entirely superficial.

And then when she came to compare him with other men—with such men as her brother John—she found that he was small and frail—that there was far more of show than of substance, and a great deal more of glare than of steady light. For a companion of the drawing-room, or the opera, or the concert, he was all that could be desired; but when she came to regard him as one to whom she must lean for support—as one upon whom she was to cling, and whose stout arm was to uphold her through all the trials of life—she did not like the picture.

At length, one evening in June, Hannibal Thistleton asked Arabella Staples if she would become his wife. At first she was troubled for an answer, and hesitated.

"How, Arabella! Do you hesitate? Do you not know how to answer me?" cried Hannibal, in unforgotten surprise.

And then Arabella told him that she could not answer him then. She must have time to think of it. Could she think of it by another night?

Yes, she thought she could.

Hannibal seemed to think that this was only a delicate manner of hinting that she did not wish to appear in a hurry to secure a husband, and he went away in a hopeful humour.

On the next day Arabella conversed with her parents, and her father was much her way of thinking. He did not think that Mr. Thistleton would make exactly such a husband as a true woman would need. He told his daughter that she had done very wrong to encourage the gentleman as she had done; but still he could not blame her very severely.

"How could I help myself?" pleaded Arabella. "There have been many times when I would have left Hannibal, but he would not let me. He has never intimated before that he wanted me to marry him."

At this point paterfamilias shook his head, and intimated that most girls would have taken such undivided attention to be in itself a sufficient indication of a desire for marriage; but he did not press the point, and Arabella went on:

"I could not get rid of the fellow. He insisted upon my accompanying him to the opera and to lectures, and to other places. I have given him hints enough that I should much prefer that he would not be quite so attentive; but he would not take them. Of course I could not refuse to see him when he called at the house, and I could not find words in which to tell him that he had better make his visits less frequent. He has given me to understand that he sought my society because he had no other friends, and he has appeared so grateful for my kindness that I could not withhold it."

Mrs. Staples was very sorry indeed, but she could not urge her daughter to marry against her will, and, furthermore, she had sense enough to see that Hannibal Thistleton was not the man as she should want for a husband.

"Just compare him with Jack," suggested Arabella.

And that was just what the proud mother had been doing. It was the thought of her stout-hearted, stalwart boy that had led her to remark the deficiency of Mr. Thistleton, and taking the two together—if Jack Staples was the *beau idéal* of the true man, then Hannibal Thistleton must have fallen far short of the mark.

On the following evening Mr. Thistleton called, and was informed by Arabella that she could not become his wife.

He was thunder-struck. He could not believe it—he would not believe it. She did not mean what she had said.

But Arabella did mean it, and she communicated the assurance to him in the most positive language.

"Mr. Thistleton," she said, as calmly as she could speak, "since you will not listen to reason I

shall leave you, and when you have had time for reflection I will write to you and give you a full explanation. If you wish it, sir, I will send my father in to converse with you, but as for myself I will bid you good-evening."

Hannibal started towards her to grasp her arm, but she avoided him and made her way from the room.

In a little while Mr. Staples entered, and when he saw what a state of excitement the young man was in he tried to calm him, but his efforts were of no avail.

The lover was frantic and would not be calmed. He declared that he would have Arabella for his wife if he had to wade through fire to gain the end. And he stamped his feet, and beat his fists, and howled to such a degree that Solomon Staples was really frightened. At one time he thought he should have to call in his daughter and give her hand to the mad lover, whether she were willing or not. He thought full sure that blood would be spilt. But after a time, and with something such a flourish as Richard III. makes when he declares his readiness to give his kingdom for a horse, Hannibal seized his hat and rushed from the house.

On the following day Arabella sat down and wrote a long letter to Mr. Thistleton. She acknowledged that she had done wrong, that she ought not to have countenanced his familiarity so long, but at the same time she appealed to his truth and generosity to admit that she was not all to blame. She had many times hesitated about keeping his company, and had more than once expressly told him that such constant intimacy might lead to results more serious than either of them anticipated; but he had laughed at her and declared that such fears were entirely groundless. She admitted again that she had done wrong, and most humbly besought him to forgive her.

She had been in a measure thoughtless, and had not weighed the circumstances as she ought, so as to be prepared for inevitable results; and she was now suffering for her wrong doing. But should she make herself miserable for life because she had made a mistake in the past? And then she appealed to him to know if he would ask her to be his wife knowing, as he must, that she did not love him. And, farther still, would not any attempt at compulsion on his part cause her even to withdraw her friendship from him? He must see, if he were not wholly blind, that they could never be nearer to each other than they were now; and she begged of him not to take any steps which could prevent her from always esteeming him as a friend, which she very much wished to do.

This letter was sealed and sent to Mr. Thistleton; but it only seemed to exasperate him still more. It probably exasperated him because its calm and candid tone, which plainly demonstrated that the writer was fixed for the purpose.

His conduct after the reception of this letter very clearly showed that Arabella had avoided a most melancholy fate in escaping marriage with him. Those very qualities which she had detected in repose, and which even then had led her to suspect him, now that they were brought into full play fairly startled her and made her shudder. She could not help thinking what a dreadful fate would have been hers if she had, in the first month of her acquaintance, been led to marry him.

And then his outrageous conduct took from him all the sympathy which he might have received if he had behaved himself. Mr. and Mrs. Staples would have sympathized with him, and neighbours and friends would have given him their sympathy; but as it was he took especial pains to show to the world that the maiden did a wise thing when she rejected him.

Hannibal Thistleton placed himself in Arabella's way on every possible occasion, and pressed his suit even where others could hear him. He exhibited to her a pistol, with which he declared he meant to take his life if she did not have him; and he plainly intimated that he would shoot the first man who dared to wait upon her in public; and one might infer from his dark threats that he might be induced to shoot her.

This was becoming intolerable. The whole family were in a state of constant alarm, for the madman had sworn that he would not cease from his importunities until Arabella had consented to become his wife. He did not care whether she loved him or not; he loved her, and that was enough.

Things were in this state when Jack Staples came home from sea; and when he had heard the story his first impulse was to find Mr. Thistleton and give

him a sound drubbing; but when the man had been pointed out to him he concluded that it would be cowardly for one like himself to lay violent hands upon such a fellow. Said he to his sister:

"Bella, you must cure him of his folly."

"Indeed, if I only knew how I would do it willingly. I would venture much, for I cannot live so much longer."

"I think," pursued the stout sailor, after a little reflection, "that we can hit upon a method without much trouble. Of one thing we may feel perfectly assured, and that is that Hannibal Thistleton is an arrant coward. No man possessing the courage of an ordinary child, would do as he does; and of course no gentleman would do it. You haven't forgotten how to fire a pistol yet?"

"Mercy! You—"

"Fshaw! I don't mean any harm at all. You used to beat me with the pistol."

"And I sometimes amuse myself now with the pretty silver revolver you gave me."

"Does Thistleton know that you have ever fired a pistol?"

"Yes. He found me once firing at a mark."

"So much the better. You wait here a moment."

Jack hurried away to his chamber, and when he returned he had a small mahogany box in his hand. This he opened, and revealed a pair of good-sized silver-mounted pistols.

"There, Bella; those I purchased as mere matters of curiosity. They are such pistols as the performers of magic legerdemain use when they allow people to fire at them. Now look, and I will show you how they are constructed. This main barrel has no connection with the tube upon which the percussion-cap is placed. You may put as much powder and as many bullets as you please into this barrel, and yet no harm can be done. Here, you observe, is a place which at first sight appears to be a socket for holding the rammer, and you see there is a rammer in it; but we can withdraw the rammer, and there we shall find a smaller barrel, into which we can put a charge of powder, and that connects with the tube. So—suppose we have a charge of powder already in this small barrel; of course, no one unacquainted with the secret would ever think of looking for a barrel there. Now, then, we go to work and make a great display of loading the pistol. We put in the powder and ball, and ram down a wadding; then we put on a cap; then we cock it; and I bid you take it and fire at me. You pull the trigger—there is an explosion; and I take from my mouth a bullet, which I pretend to have caught there as it came from the pistol; but in reality only the blank charge in the inferior barrel was fired. From the main barrel we can draw the charge at our leisure; but it cannot be reached with fire, except we introduce it at the muzzle. Do you understand it?"

Arabella understood it very well, and she thought it very curious. She had seen a professor perform that very trick, and she had wondered exceedingly how he did it.

"And now," pursued Jack, "you must play a trick upon this infatuated lover of yours. You used to be a pretty good actress. Do you think you could act now?"

"If by acting I might rid myself of that man's importunities I think I could act like a Rachel."

"Very well—we shall see. Now give me your attention, and I will explain how it is to be done."

Hannibal Thistleton could hardly credit the evidence of his own senses. He held in his hand a note from Arabella Staples—a note in her own hand—inviting him to call upon her that evening. She should be alone to receive him.

"Aha!" laughed Hannibal. "And so I have brought the proud beauty to terms. I thought she could not stand it long. By heaven!"—(he here started across the room, smiting his fists together)—"I'd have hunted her to the end of the earth but she should have capitulated! So, so, my pretty one! The man you would have scorned has proved too much for you! But never mind. 'All's well that ends well.' I shall lay nothing up against her, if she behave herself in the future."

Mr. Thistleton put the note into his pocket, and at a proper hour—not far from eight o'clock—he pulled the bell-knob at Mr. Staples's door. A servant-girl answered the summons and escorted him into the parlour, where the blinds were shut, the curtains drawn close, and the burners of the chandelier all lighted. Miss Arabella was there, alone, and she arose as he entered, and motioned him to a seat.

How strangely she looked. And how strangely

she acted. She was dressed in a robe of plain black silk, fitting closely to the neck; her hair was combed smoothly back from her brow, and floated in wavy masses over her shoulders; and of ornament she wore not a thing. He intended to have spoken—to have spoken condescendingly and kindly—so that she might see that he had it in his heart to forgive her; but there was something in her look and manner that held him spell-bound.

"Mr. Thistleton," she said, when he had taken a seat, speaking in a stern, cold tone, "I have sent for you, and I am glad that you have come. There is no need that I should waste time by recounting the occurrences of the past; but I must be permitted to say that they cannot be longer continued. You say that life can be nothing to you without me for your wife. Have you not said so?"

"My dear—"

"Keep your seat, sir! and answer me direct, if you please. I want a simple yes or no. Have you not said that life could be nothing to you without me?"

"Yes."

"And do you still persist in that declaration?"

"I do."

"Then, sir, watch my movements. I want you to pay particular attention, for I have no desire to take you at a disadvantage."

Thus speaking Arabella turned to the table by her side and opened a small mahogany box that stood thereon. From this she took two pistols and laid them upon the cloth. Then she took a small silver flask and lifted first one and then another of the pistols, pouring a charge of powder into the barrel of each.

"You will observe," she said, "that I load these weapons both alike." Her voice was as cold, stern and steady as though she had been a second Catharine of Russia, and not a muscle of her frame quivered. "These bullets, you will observe, fit snugly, and I can assure you that they are not playthings. And these percussion-caps, sir, are of the most approved make. Not one of them was ever known to miss."

Slowly and surely she loaded both the pistols, and when they had been capped she held them by the barrels, one in each hand, and faced her visitor.

"Hannibal Thistleton, you have said your say, now listen to mine. You cannot live without me. I cannot live with you. Still I admit that I have done wrong and am willing to make all the reparation in my power. I cannot give you my hand, and you will not give it up. So one of us must die—perhaps both. You are a man of courage—I have heard you say so many times—and now you shall have opportunity to prove it. Here are two pistols. You shall take one and I will take the other. I will station myself upon one side of this table and you shall stand opposite to me. I will give the words—one—two—three—and at the word three we fire. I shall aim at your heart, sir."

"Good heavens!" gasped Hannibal Thistleton, starting to his feet and quivering like an aspen. "Do you think I could fire at a woman?"

"Do I think you could fire at a woman?" repeated Arabella, in tones and with a gesture that would have brought down the house at the theatre. "What have you been doing for the past month? Fire at a woman! Why, you poor, quivering, soul-forsaken wretch. Have you not been as a crawling viper in my path, hissing and darting forth your poisonous forked tongue? Fire at a woman! Have you not been persistent in harassing and insulting me at every turn? Out upon thee, thou craven! Fire upon a woman! In heaven's name don't count me as woman. But enough of this. Ere the golden sun of another day breaks the prison bars of night, and ascends to reveal the deeds that have been done on earth during the vigils of the stars, either you or I shall have crossed the dark river into that far-off unseen where mortal ken hath never reached. Here are the pistols. Take your choice. They are both alike. Take one of them—take it."

Like one in a terrible dream the man took a pistol, and then moved back towards the seat he had occupied.

"No, no," cried Arabella, with a commanding wave of the hand. "Not there. Stand by this table."

No actress upon the stage ever excelled the acting of that time. Arabella had not only made herself perfect in her part, but the presence of the man who had so meanly abused her—who, when she had humbly begged his pardon, had used the advantage of his position to worry and insult her—the presence of the man and his craven appearance as he cowered

before her—gave vigour to her power, and she really felt in her very veins the character she had assumed. Her eyes flashed, her bosom swelled, and her whole frame seemed to dilate with the wondrous emotions that gave direction to her speech.

Hannibal Thistleton moved a step towards the table, and stopped. He had no room for doubting the maiden's intent. It was too plainly recorded in her looks and actions. His course had driven her to frenzy, and she was mad. He had read of just such women—of women who had conceived great passions—and he knew that they were implacable. He remembered Charlotte Corday and Joan of Arc; and he thought of the wicked queens, and of Lucretia Borgia. His knees quivered beneath him, and his face was pale as death.

"Mr. Thistleton," spoke Arabella, advancing to the place she had allotted herself to occupy, "I have said that I could not live with you; and I may add that I cannot live to be fretted and harassed by you. It is a hard thing to take a human life; but there are some things that are harder. Come—are you ready?"

"Not to fire at a woman," gasped Thistleton, advancing and laying his pistol upon the table.

Arabella laughed scornfully.

"Oh, what a craven coward, thus to steal away behind so miserable a subterfuge! But never mind. I know that a jury of twelve honourable men would never pronounce me guilty of murder for shooting a man like you, under such provocation as you have forced upon me. Oh—don't crouch in that fashion! I shall not shoot you without giving you fair warning. And now listen, for this is my warning—"

"Hold! Hold!" cried the trembling wretch, putting forth his hand as she raised her pistol in a threatening manner. "There is no need that you should speak farther. You would never make a fitting wife for me; and I shall importune you no more. Thus far I have been led only—only—by my own—"

The poor fellow was so completely broken down that his speech failed him, and as he stood there, pale and trembling, Arabella went and opened the door, and pointed that way with her finger.

Hannibal Thistleton took the hint, and made the best of his way from the room and from the house. And when he had gone, and the sound of his steps had died away in the distance, Arabella sank down so weak and faint that she would have fallen to the floor had not her brother held her in his arms.

"Courage, courage, Bella. Upon my life that was better than any play I ever saw. Did it take hold of you so deeply?"

"I couldn't have borne it much longer, Jack. I felt every word I spoke. I believe if the pistols had been proper weapons I could have stood up and let him fire at me. I was fairly carried away by the part I assumed."

"All right, my sweet sister. You'll soon get over it."

"It will be all right if that man never trouble me again."

"Have no fears on that score, Bella. If he dare to speak to you after this I will try what virtue there may be in my persuasion."

But Jack Staples had no occasion to make known the peculiar kind of persuasion he might have resorted to, for the infatuated lover troubled Arabella no more; and in less than a week thereafter it was known to some of those who had missed their music-teacher that he had left the village.

S. C. J.

VIRGINIA.

CHAPTER IX.

MRS. LANDER had taken possession of her brother-in-law's estate under the will, and for the first time in her life began to enjoy the power of wealth, the sublime pleasure of possession. True, all this fortune gave her no additional comfort, nor insured to her a luxury not hitherto her own, for since her husband's death she had been denied nothing by his generous brother. But this, to a nature like hers, or indeed to any nature capable of ambition, was the smallest result of wealth. She wanted its power, its influence among men—the reputation it conferred—the envy it created. Having been dependent all her life, these things took a mighty value in her estimation, and no queen ever mounted a throne with more pride than this woman felt in seizing upon the estate which seemed to have fallen into her possession by a miracle.

Up to this time Mrs. Lander had been very liberal in her social ideas and luxuriously extravagant in her personal habits. That she always would be, having

gorgeous tastes by nature, and that coarse hankering for display which women of low birth and inferior associations in early youth are liable to acquire. Beyond this she could not go, and a vast capacity for intrigue lay useless and buried in her life which was likely to find room for display now. She was not very old either; not much beyond forty. A fresh complexion, robust but symmetrical form, and rather juvenile carriage, made her seem even younger than that. With great wealth added to these attractions there was much in the future for a woman like that to expect and hope for.

Mrs. Lander went into deep mourning at once. Crape folds a yard in depth covered the skirts of her bombazine dresses; crape veils, with hems that made them almost double, fell from her bonnet; not a shade of white was allowed to appear about her person. The very handkerchiefs wetted by her tears had a black border one-fourth of an inch wide running under the broadest of broad hems.

The woman mourned for her daughter undoubtedly. This elaborate show of grief was not all pretence. She would have been delighted to hear that Cora had escaped the shipwreck; doubly delighted if the rescue of her child could have been achieved without disturbing the will which made her mistress of everything. No doubt she would have been a generous and munificent mother in that case, proud of her child and ready to further her interests to the utmost; but she would have shuddered a little at the thought of depending on Cora Lander for subsistence, though a thought of this kind never crossed her mind before. Poor Cora was gone with the rest, and ten thousand perfections hovered around her memory. Still the wealth was a consolation.

Five or six weeks after the sad news Mrs. Lander sent for Joshua Hurd. Joshua's manner was a little singular when he came into the presence of his mistress. He looked around for his sister, and seemed relieved that she was not there. Then he sat down on the sofa.

"Joshua," she said, "I have been thinking about the horses."

"That's exactly in my line," he answered.

"The pair of chestnuts don't exactly suit me."

"They're splendid creatures as ever drew a carriage," interrupted Joshua, bluntly.

"They are too bright—too showy for my mourning."

"Mourning! Why, who ever heard of putting horses in mourning, I'd like to know? Never was a better or a purtier pair of horses druv."

"The truth is, Joshua, now that I am mistress here I'd like to choose my own horses and carriages, and have the credit of good taste to myself."

"Well, I reckon that's natural," he said. "So you want to sell them chestnuts? How much are you going to ask for 'em?"

"That is what I wanted to talk to you about. Of course I shall defer to your judgment."

Joshua drew himself up, blushing to the temples.

"I'll sell 'em for you—but what kind of animals do you want now?"

"A pair of fine, well-matched blacks, if they can be found. You can sell the chestnuts and buy the blacks, as I directed. Use your own judgment in the whole matter. Go now, Joshua, and remember that hereafter you are master yonder."

"And who is mistress here?" demanded Eunice.

"I am," answered Mrs. Lander, with firmness. "and this scene must never be repeated, Eunice. Understand me clearly—must never be repeated."

"Just say that agin!" said the virago, wrathfully. "I understand you; you want to get the blind side of that soft-hearted creature, and so be one too many for me if I should be rusty. But let me catch him in here agin, or you in there, and I'll show you what's what!"

Mrs. Lander was very pale; every vestige of colour left her lips, they were pressed so firmly together. She seemed about to say something defiant, but she strained upon her nerves had been too great, and she fell into a chair, faint and trembling. What was she, with all her wealth, but a slave?

CHAPTER X.

THE next day Joshua, proud of his commission, resolved to stay a week in town rather than return without the animals his mistress had expressed a fancy for. He drove directly to a large public stable well known as a sort of horse-dealer's, and at once put up his chestnuts for sale.

While he was hanging about the stables a young man drove up in a cab and entered the place, followed by a lad, who jumped down from his seat by the driver and lingered near the door, as if afraid of losing sight of his master.

In a place like this Joshua Hurd felt perfectly at home; he went up to the lad and spoke to him good-naturedly enough.

"Is that 'ere young man arter hosses?" he asked

Brian Nolan replied that he thought so, but was not quite sure.

"Get two in there that I'd like to sell him," said Joshua. "What's his colour?"

"I don't know," answered Brian, "but there he comes, and you can ask him."

Joshua saw that the young man was entering the stables with the proprietor, and sauntered after them, whistling in an undertone.

"I've got the prettiest pair of chestnuts that you ever set eyes on; just come in. You're fortunate to be in time, sir. Those animals won't stay on hand long, I can promise you. The gentleman who owned them was the best judge of horse-flesh that ever visited my stable, or rather his man was, and that's the same thing."

"Why does he sell them, if they are so perfect?" inquired the stranger.

"They're splendid creatures," said Joshua, entering into the conversation without scruple; "not a fault. The person who owned 'em is dead, and the lady thinks that the colour is too bright for mourning. She wants black horses."

The young man took little heed of this speech. He was busy examining the horses, and the proprietor saw at once that he had no ordinary judge to deal with.

"I can offer you nothing better than these if you fancy the colour," he said. "They are noble animals."

"They are noble animals. But why does the owner sell them?" repeated Seymour, going back to his original question.

"He was lost at sea—in the steamer that was burned, you remember."

The young man shrank from the subject, which drove the colour from his face.

"I have heard of it," he said, hoarsely.

"Terrible thing, wasn't it?" rejoined the horse-dealer. "Such a fine old man, too."

"Was he alone?"

"No; that is the most horrible part of it. His only daughter and his niece went down with him."

"But there must be a survivor—or is there no one left to claim these noble beasts?"

"The property goes by will, I am told, to some widow."

"She is a fortunate woman," said Seymour, absently; "that is, if young enough to enjoy her money."

This did not seem a leading question, yet there was something like interest in the traveller's eyes as he waited for the answer. He could not have accounted for this feeling himself.

"I don't know her exact age, but she is a handsome, stylish woman, with a good deal of life in her."

"You are her servant, I suppose?" said the young man.

"Have them put in harness, and let us take a turn in the park. I should like to try their action. I will drive them myself."

The horses were attached to a light vehicle, and Seymour took his seat with the ease of a man accustomed to the position. Joshua climbed up to his side, and they were about to drive on when Seymour remembered Brian Nolan, and bent over the wheel to address him.

"Stay about the stables, and find out all you can regarding these horses," he said, in a low voice.

The lad answered with his eyes, which were full of intelligence. Seymour tightened his reins and drove on in splendid style.

The park was beautiful that day. It was too early for the regular exhibition there, and the chestnut horses had a fine, free sweep along the avenues, delighting their driver and almost giving animation to Joshua. Seymour, keenly as he relished the beauties of nature, scarcely regarded the sweet air he breathed or the lovely objects that surrounded him. A strange feeling of depression fell upon him. He drove the horses splendidly, but with a grace and ease that was purely mechanical. At last he fell into conversation with Joshua, not about the horses, as most natural, but dwelt with a sort of weird fascination on the fate of their former owner.

Was he certainly dead? Yes, there could be no doubt of that. And the young ladies, was it positive that they had perished too? Yes, all had gone down—the old man without a struggle, but the girls had managed to get into a boat, which was swamped after they had almost felt themselves safe. How long had they been abroad? Eight years. They had been like sisters all their lives, took the same lessons, wore the same clothes, and were allowed the same pocket money.

In fact, you could hardly tell them apart when they were little girls; but eight years changed them a good deal. Joshua would always know them by the temper, if nothing else, for the niece was not amiable, while the other was like an angel. But they were both dead now, and no harm was done since the brother's widow had got the money. What had they been doing abroad? Why, going to school,

to be sure, what else could girls of that age be expected to do? For the last six months they had been travelling about in what people called the Holy Land, which Joshua supposed was the easiest thing to do if they had got to die so soon.

All this time the names of these persons who interested him so much had not been mentioned. For some unaccountable reason Seymour had shrunk from asking it. Vague fears were creeping over his heart, and his voice was husky when he at length forced himself to say:

"But the name—you have not yet told me the name."

"The name, sir—why, Lander, of course."

That instant the chestnuts gave a wild leap and strained hard upon the reins, that had been sharply tightened, till one of them began to rear.

Joshua turned, looked into the deadly white face of the young man, and snatched the reins from his hands.

"What on earth are you about? Such driving would put wolfishness into a pair of lambs! So, so, old fellows—easy—easy, that'll do. There, sir, you see how easily they are managed."

"Home, home," said the young man. "I am satisfied. Drive back."

"What's the matter?" inquired Joshua, bluntly. "Did the horses frighten you so? Why, you're as white as a sheet."

The young man was trembling from head to foot. His face was contracted like marble, his very lips were bloodless.

"Home, home," he said; "I feel ill."

Joshua drove back to the stables in silence. The colour had come slowly back to Seymour's face, but there was a look of suffering on it that startled the proprietor of the stables as he drove up. Had anything happened? Were the horses restive?

Joshua shook his head. Seymour did not seem to hear him, but stepping from the vehicle walked away. The proprietor followed him.

"Did he not like the horses?"

"Like them? Oh, yes—oh, yes," said Seymour, slowly retracing his steps. "Put them to my account, and send to my hotel for the money."

All this was said in a calm, low voice; but it seemed as if a statue were speaking. No price had yet been named for the horses, and he had forgotten that entirely.

"But we have not agreed on terms," said the proprietor, glancing at Joshua.

"No," said the young man, absently. "What are they?"

The proprietor named a tolerably reasonable sum.

"That will do. Take good care of them."

"But your address, sir?" said the proprietor, taking up a pen from his desk.

Seymour took the pen and attempted to write, but his hand shook upon the paper, and after he left the address it could hardly be made out.

Brian Nolan followed his master in silence. He saw the look of pain in those dark eyes, and his young heart sympathized for him.

They went into the hotel together, and passed into the ladies' entrance hall. Coming down the long passage on the second storey, was a hunchbacked girl, who seemed to have lost her way, for she was looking anxiously at the numbers over each door.

Brian caught hold of his master's coat, and the violence of this action aroused the young man.

"What is it, Brian? are you ill?"

The lad held him fast, his pale lips were parted, but he could not speak. His eyes followed the hunchback almost in terror.

"Poor fellow! the old suffering has come back," muttered Seymour, laying a hand kindly on his shoulder. "Brian, my boy."

"It is her! Those are Ellen's eyes. I know her! I know her! she is my sister!"

"Your sister?"

The lad uttered a cry and darted away.

"Ellen! Ellen! oh, Ellen, it is me! It is me!"

The girl started, turned her great eyes on the boy, and came towards him with both her hands extended.

"Alive! alive! you and I!" she said, clinging to him, while tears rained down her radiant face. "Is it, is it you?"

"Oh, sir! it is my sister—my own sister Ellen, that I told you of! She jumped overboard with the rest, and is saved. I know you will be glad for me," cried Brian, drawing the girl up to his master. "See how helpless she is!"

"Poor thing! dear little girl! I am glad to find you here—glad for his sake. He is a good boy," said Seymour, with great feeling.

"He always was a good boy, sir," answered Ellen, smiling through her tears. "Oh, so good!"

"And she, sir," joined in Brian, "she, sir, for all her size, and—and—"

"He means this, sir," said Ellen, gently glancing at her shoulder. "It makes me ill sometimes."

"She is as brave as a little lion, though, and kind—yes, she would be just as kind as you are, sir, if she had anything but her two hands."

"Let me look at you, dear," said Seymour, laying one hand on her forehead and bending her face back.

"Yes, you have the family look. These are Brian's features—softer, though, as a girl's should be."

"Do I look like him—do I, really?" cried the girl, eagerly.

"Yes, child, I think so."

"Then people must like my face, at any rate," she said.

Seymour smiled faintly and moved a little way from them.

"Oh! Brian, we went through so much!" said the girl, "so much."

"But you are saved!"

"And you?"

They clung together in newborn joy, closer and closer, as if someone threatened to tear them apart. The young man looked on, interested.

"But how came you here?"

"Brian, an angel brought me!"

The girl spoke earnestly, and her eyes were suffused with eager warmth.

"An angel!"

"So beautiful, Brian! so good! so full of courage! She helped me through the water. I pulled her down, but she would not let me go. There! there she is!"

A door had opened as Ellen uttered her shriek, and two young women looked out, wondering what the sound could mean. Ellen led her brother towards them.

"Oh, miss, forgive me for screaming out. It is my brother. I thought he had gone down with them, but it is he. Don't let anybody take him away from me again—oh, don't! don't!"

One of the young ladies stepped into the hall and laid her hand kindly on Brian's shoulder.

"So you are her brother?" she said, in a sweet, sympathetic voice. "I am glad of that. How were you saved?"

"Somebody hung a chair over, and I got hold of it till one of the boats picked me up."

"I wonder if some of the rest were saved?" said Ellen. "Oh! it seems to me as if an angel had rescued you!"

The young creature lifted her eyes to the beautiful face of her mistress, smiling gratefully, though tears were again streaming down her face.

"Let us hope for the best," said Virginia Lander.

"But tell me, my lad, how did you reach this place, and what are you doing here?"

"A vessel that picked us up brought me. I was ill and almost starved, looking for work, when a gentleman, so kind and good, hired me to wait on him. He is here, I came in with him."

That moment a form glided by the little group and went swiftly down the hall, so swiftly that no one saw more than the flutter of Cora Lander's black garments as she swept past Seymour, her eyes wild with delight, her hands held out eagerly.

"Oh! I am thankful!" cried out the young man.

"My love, my darling, I thought that you were dead!"

"You here! you here?" she answered, giving him both her hands. "And I felt so wretched a moment ago."

"Cora! Cora! I shall go mad with joy! Not an hour since they told me that you had perished at sea."

"And you had but just heard of it? You believed me lost? Was that why you looked so sad?"

"Judge for yourself. I have followed you, a what sacrifice no human being will ever know. Everything that a man holds dear I risked rather than lose you. My sole object was to win you, claim you, love you for ever and ever. An hour ago they told me you were dead; my life seemed to leave me."

"Then you mourned, Horace?"

"Mourned! Great heavens! can you ask me?"

"But now—now that you see me alive and well—yes, yes, I think you are glad."

"Glad!"

"I know you are. Oh, Seymour, I do think you love me."

"Better than my life—better than my own soul! There's nothing on earth that I would not do for you, nothing a man holds dear that I have not sacrificed for you already."

"I do not understand."

"Perhaps not—you never may. But who is that lady with hair like yours?—That form, the face too?"

"That is my cousin. Some day I will introduce you—not now. She has but just come on shore. We shall start this evening or early in the morning."

"Not to-night; let it be to-morrow. This evening I must see you again."

"I shall abide by my cousin's decision."

"Abide by her decision! Does this cousin control you, then?"

"Control me! No; she hasn't the spirit to control a mouse."

"Then you will stay?"

"Yes, if you desire it so much; but—"
Cora broke off abruptly. Seymour was looking at Virginia Lander, who that moment turned her eyes upon him, her attention having been directed that way by some words uttered by Brian. The expression of her face was beautiful just then. Sympathy with those two helpless creatures had filled her eyes with compassionate tenderness. A sweet smile hovered about her mouth, and all her face was bright with feeling. She did indeed look like an angel rejoicing over the salvation of two innocent fellow-beings.

The young man gazed upon her, fascinated! He had not even heard Cora's last promise. A shadow, which was almost a frown, came over the girl's face.

"How very lovely she is. True, there is a wonderful likeness, but—such a difference. I never saw a sweeter smile on human lips."

Cora passed him with angry, scarlet burning in her cheeks.

"Virginia, does it make you as getting up a scene here?" she said. "Let these two strange creatures go up to Ellen's room. It will not do for us to form interesting tableaux in the hall. Oh, Ellen, go and take your luncheon away; it will make it tight with his master."

Ellen and Brian started off, clinging together and smiling in each other's faces, but crying all the time. Virginia withdrew into the parlour, delighted with this gleam of happiness, seeing as it did out of the awful catastrophe which had made her an orphan. Cora stood in the hall, proud as Juno, waiting to be reconciled. Seymour drew close to her.

"So this is your cousin," he said. "I never thought that any human being could hate you before."

Cora answered him with a haughty toss of the head.

"If you think so now I am glad to hear it in time."

The pique and jealousy which embittered these words were manifest and genuine. Seymour was a man of the world, and had read many a woman's heart before that day, to the owner's cost, perhaps.

"You are angry with me. For what?" he questioned, in a low voice.

"Angry? No, no; but my cousin will miss me and wonder that I stay so long with a stranger."

"A stranger, Cora!"

"That is what she thinks you, and what you in fact are. How much do I know of you?"

"But you shall know everything. I wish no concealment. Grant me one interview, where we can converse in quiet—when shall it be, and where?"

Cora started. Her cousin was standing at the parlour door looking for her.

"This evening, come to this room. She will retire early."

Seymour bowed and walked away, smiling over his success. Cora rejoined her cousin.

"It is the boy's master," she said, carelessly. "A fine-looking young man—don't you think so?"

"Yes, he is handsome, and that poor boy says very kind. Did you speak with him?"

"Only a few words; but tell me, dear, had we not better rest where we are to-night? Think how great the shock would be to my poor mother should we come upon her unawares."

"That is true; in my haste to get home I forgot that; but we can telegraph before the train starts."

"That would bring our arrival too early. Give her a night to think upon it. At the best our return home will be painful enough."

Virginia looked down at her black dress and thought of her father with a pang of sorrow.

"Arrange it as you please, Cora. Heaven knows, I shall not be happy anywhere."

CHAPTER XI.

JOSHUA HURD went down to the hotel where Seymour was staying to get the money for his horses, and chanced to pass up the hall just as Cora and her cousin were standing within the parlour door. The beauty of these girls would have been striking anywhere, but in deep mourning and saddened by misfortune, the effect of their appearance was calculated to excite something deeper and purer than admiration. Joshua was not much given to emotions of taste or feeling, but he stopped short in his quick, plunging walk, and stared at them with doubt and astonishment in his face.

"By gorum, if grown folks ever looked like children them gals belong to the family somehow. Such hair as that doesn't crop out on any other heads that I know on. What if it was them?"

While he stood muttering these words to himself

Virginia Lander came out of the parlour and passed him. Her long black dress swept across his heavy shoes, and her side face was turned towards him.

"Marm, marm—I say—is—is it you, or ain't it nobody as I cares about? My name is Joshua Hurd."

"Joshua Hurd!" exclaimed Virginia, turning back.

"Oh, I am so glad you are here!"

"And it's you, and t'other one too; I saw you a standing together, and my heart arose right up into my mouth. But the old gentleman, is he alive too? Thought you was all gone."

Virginia turned her face away, not in anger at the stolid creature, but the pain at her young heart was terrible.

"We came back alone," she said, with tears in her voice. "Do not let us talk of it. My cousin and I are all that you will ever see."

"That's bad," answered Joshua, really disappointed. "Good gracious! wh'd a thought of finding you here after we'd all gone into mourning for you, and got a little pacified about so many going down at once. I only hope all'll take it mild."

"We have just been speaking of that—my cousin and I. No one must be taken by surprise."

"I believe I'd better go right home my ownself and break the news to her. She's got used to the property, you know."

Virginia smiled faintly at this, and said, in her innocence:

"Oh, she will never think of that. It will make no difference to her."

"Who is this?" exclaimed Cora, joining them.

"What, Josh! dear old Josh!"

"Yes, marm, it's me, sure enough. But you—by jingo, I can't tell which is which. How you have grown; both on you!"

"Then you cannot tell us apart, Joshua?" said Cora, smiling. "Try, try!"

"Couldn't do it to save my life," was the puzzled answer. "Defy her to tell which is her own daughter and which isn't."

Virginia, who had fallen back into the sadness which had become habitual to her, seemed distressed by the light tone of this conversation, and asked Joshua if he could go by the first train and carry the news of their arrival to the home which they would be sure to reach in the morning.

"Yes," Joshua said.

"I will write a line and have it ready," said Cora, with a great deal of nervous excitement. "Are you going upstairs, cousin?"

"Yes," said Virginia, sadly. "Even this meeting troubles me more than I expected."

A strange light came over Cora's eyes; she was evidently glad to be alone.

For ten minutes after she entered the parlour Cora Lander walked up and down the room, at first rapidly, like one whose thoughts were in a tumult; then with measured paces, as she collected those thoughts out of chaos and planted them in her mind. She took up a pen to write at last, but flung it down again, having formed a quick resolution.

"Let him go," she said, beginning to pace the floor again. "It is better so. I will send neither note nor message, but let me be certain."

She rang the bell, and when the servant answered she inquired what was the latest train. The man answered that one would leave a little before eleven. She dismissed him and gave herself up to anxious thought again.

When Joshua came down for his instructions Cora was sitting alone, grave, and apparently composed. "She had changed her mind about writing. Indeed, the effort was too much, but Joshua could tell all that was necessary. Her cousin and herself had escaped and were in London. A vessel had picked them up at sea when almost starved; but those things would all be explained in due time without burdening his memory with them. Tell our friends at home that he had seen them, and it would be enough."

This she said very quietly, looking in his face all the time, as if to challenge close observation; as he was going out she called him back and said, with a smile:

"So you cannot make out which of us belongs to the lady, or which is the orphan and heiress?"

"No, I'll be hung if I can."

"Oh, you are dull, Joshua; but there will be plenty who can tell us apart, I dare say."

"Not a creature, without it's our Eunice. She might."

"Oh, Eunice. How cross she was," said Cora, holding up her hands in mock terror.

"Cross! Wall, I reckon she is."

"But she was always devoted to—Mrs. Lander."

"And is yet; but natur's natur, and Eunice's is awful sometimes. Now Mr. Lander was a good man, but she o' enamored hated him."

"But his daughter, she was a favourite with Eunice."

"No, she wasn't. If you're her you must have

found that out. She took to the other girl mostly, and so did I."

"Indeed! Well, well, you will think better of it when we get home. Go now, Joshua, or you will be too late for the train. By the way, had you not better go early in the morning? It will give you plenty of time. We shall not start before ten."

"As you think best," he said. "Shouldn't wonder if the madam'll be disappointed when she finds it all put," he muttered. "It'll come awful tough for her to give up. Jest as you think best."

"Go now; go, my good fellow, or you will get no rest," she said. "Be sure and start very early in the morning."

Joshua raised himself heavily from the damask chair on which he had been seated, muttering to himself:

"I'll make sure of that by going up to-night."

The moment he was gone Cora went up to her cousin's chamber, and flinging herself on a couch complained bitterly of a headache, which she said was torturing her. But she decided Virginia's offered help, and lay with her face to the wall, apparently asleep, but buried in deep thought. At dark some tea and a light supper was sent up, of which they both partook with considerable appetite, Cora observing that a headache like that was sure to make her hungry, while her cousin suggested that they had eaten nothing since morning—an unwise thing when they had both so much need of strength. After a little time Cora arose and proposed going to bed at once.

"We have had a weary day," she said, "and you look very pale, dear; besides, I am so depressed."

"Yes; it is a sad return home. I do not feel as if I should ever sleep sweetly again."

"But you must. I will not go to my own room till you are safe in bed; you would sit up crying half the night if I left you alone."

"No, my heart is too mournful for tears."

"Still you must try for rest, or no sleep will come to me."

"For your sake, then, I will go."

Virginia arose with a weary look and prepared herself for bed. Cora helped her to undress, and with a gentle hand brushed out the masses of chestnut-brown hair which glowed with a ruddy tinge in the light as she braided it loosely in one massive cable. These pleasant feminine attentions were rather unusual to her, and Virginia received them gratefully.

"Ah! what a mournful day we shall have to-morrow," she sighed, wearily taking off her dress. "You have something to look forward to, Cora, but I—"

The unhappy girl turned away her head, and lying down half undressed, with her cheek to the pillow, began to cry.

"Don't, don't give way so," said Cora, bending over her. "Remember, to-morrow we shall be home."

Virginia sobbed still more piteously.

"At home, without him! Rich, helpless, oppressed with cares. How shall I ever fill his place?"

A strange look crept over Cora's features. She almost smiled, yet a hateful expression mingled with the smile.

"Do not think about that now but put on your nightdress; you will take cold."

Virginia arose and invested herself in the fall white garment which gave her a nun-like purity of look. She dropped on her knees, and with her face buried in both hands prayed meekly for several minutes. Then she arose with a heavy sigh, and kissing her cousin good-night, lay down, turning her face to the wall.

"Good-night, dear. Rest well," said Cora, smoothing the counterpane with her hand. "Now I can go content. Good-night."

With these words Cora stole softly out of the room, murmuring a good-night as she went.

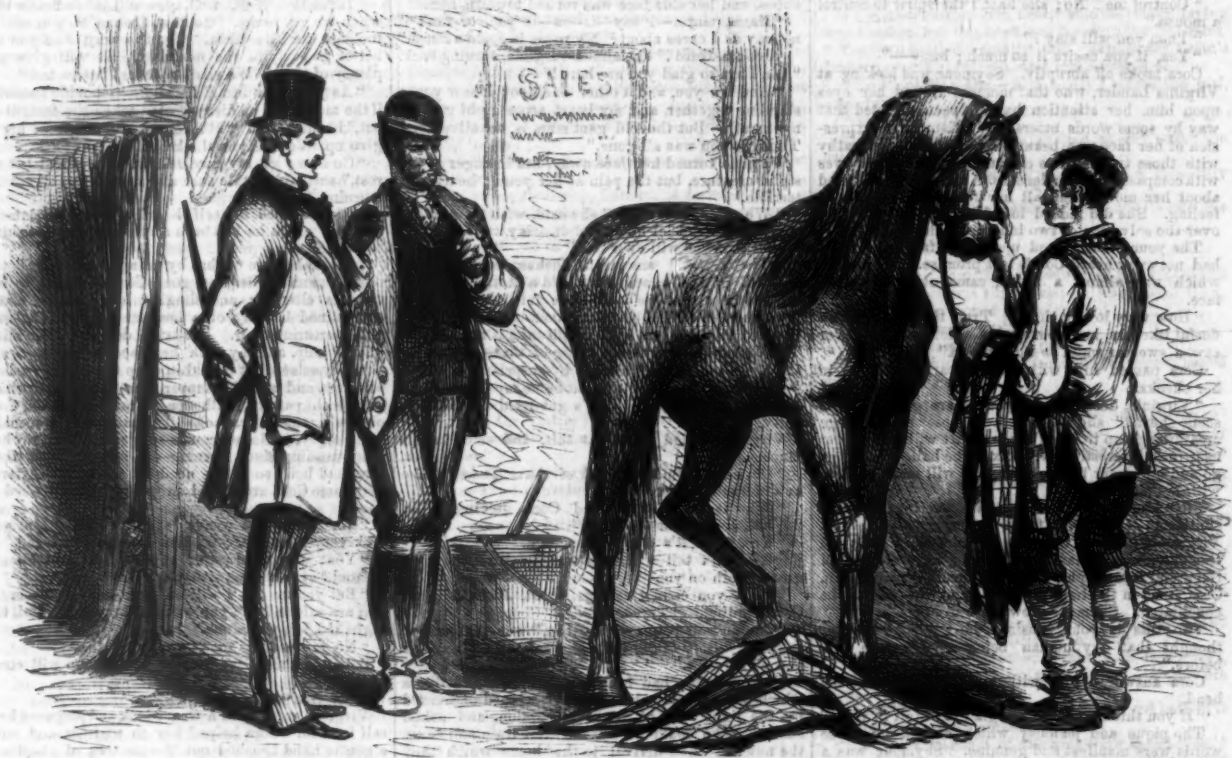
Instead of going to her own chamber the girl turned towards the staircase and swept down to the broad hall on which their parlour opened. At the lower end of this passage she saw Seymour walking up and down, on the watch. The moment her dark garments fluttered into sight he came forward and followed her into the room. She closed the door and drew a bolt, so gently that he did not detect the action.

"Now, now tell me everything," she said, seating herself on a couch and motioning him to a place by her side. "I am anxious, eager to know what brought you here."

"Why ask that?" cried the young man, bending his radiant eyes upon her, while her hand was pressed between both his so ardently that her fingers unconsciously returned the clasp. "Why ask? You brought me here."

"And you love me so?"

"Love you! Don't ask me how much, or I might tell you what I have done."



[SEYMOUR MAKES A PURCHASE.]

"What you have done? But I do ask."
 "Ask what, dear one? There is nothing to tell. I have moved heaven and earth to reach this place—to obtain the means without which you would not be yourself. I have money now, brightest and dearest—ready gold and plenty of it, at least, for the present; enough, in fact, to give us a fair start in life. Only say that you love me dearly as I love you, and a glorious future is before us."

"I have said it a hundred times, Seymour," she answered, bending fondly towards him, but remarking, even in this rush and glow of affection, that he looked wild and spoke hurriedly, with his eyes bent downward.

"But again and again have I earned it! I want to see love-light in your eyes and passion on your lips every moment of my life. It is my food, my drink, the air I breathe. Oh, girl! girl! how I love you!" He threw his arms around her and strained her to his bosom with a vehemence that frightened her. She was ardent and given up to her own wild will like himself, but there was something beside love in all this, and she felt it with a thrill of terror.

"You are cold; you shrink from me, after all that I have done to win you—while my heart is struggling so madly to find yours."

"No! no!" she protested. "I love you—I love you—ten thousand times over I love you! It may be folly, it may be madness, but I do love you."

"My darling! my brave, bright, beautiful love! Now I am no longer afraid. I regret nothing. There is no treachery, no wrong that love like this would not sanctify in its object. Let me look at you. Heavens, how beautiful you are! These little warm hands, how they cling to mine! how white they are! But I will make them rosy with kisses. Oh, girl! girl! I thought you were dead, that this glorious form was weltering in the deep, torn by sharks—lost! lost! The thought was driving me mad. But you are here! you are here! I can see your heart beat and your cheeks flush, and those dear lips parted as you listen. Tell me! tell me once more how much you love me!"

"Why ask me again?" she said. "Did I ever deny my love when you were penniless?"

"No, girl, no; but you refused to share that penniless state."

"Because I hoped for something better. My—my relative was then alive. He was generous, and loved me. When we reached home I intended to appeal to him. It would not have been in vain."

"Was this your real intention?"

"I had no other. You would have heard from me."

I might have asked such letters as would satisfy him of your honourable position, nothing more. But he is dead."

"And so we must fall back on my little hoard of gold. Will that be enough for you?"

"It would be difficult to say how much would be enough," answered Cora, with a bright smile. "Plenty of property is necessary to make love like ours perfect. I should perish, body and soul, without objects of beauty all around me. Is it because you are so handsome, so peerlessly graceful, that I can think of no one else? I often ask myself, if you were plain and insignificant, even common looking, would not my pride sweep you off among the herd of ordinary men?"

"I never thanked heaven for good looks before," said Seymour, with genuine warmth. "In fact, I never thought of it; few men do, I fancy. Then, if I had been good and great, and all that men study and strive for, you might never have thought of me?"

"Oh, I would have everything; but I shall make you vain—your eyes flash with triumph already. See how easily a woman loses her power when she says honestly, 'I love you.'"

"No, no; she exalts herself. Would that I had millions to lavish upon you instead of twenty paltry thousands."

"Twenty thousand, that is not much," she said, growing thoughtful for a moment. "But what then? We shall not be without resources; I have ideas, and courage and will enough for anything. What if I were richer than you think?"

"So that you loved me still I should rejoice—but only for your sake." The young man spoke honestly, and with a tone of sadness in his voice. "Could I have been sure of your poverty would have been nothing. Oh! how much better it would have been to work for you! But all that is over, and I am brave enough to be glad."

"We must not talk of work—I hate it," said Cora, smiling brightly upon him. "To me the world is divided into two classes—those who work and those who enjoy. Had I been of the working classes the very loathing of it would have driven me to struggle upwards, as both men and women can in this country."

"Ah! if we could have had patience to wait for that," said Seymour, with sudden passion. "To work alone even, hoping for you in the end, would have been heaven to me; I could have served any hard task-master, like Jacob, for seven long years."

"And in the meantime I should have grown old

and ugly—you round-shouldered, perhaps," said Cora, laughing. "No, no: let us have all or nothing. The world is before us. Fortune has always been true to me. Like the lilies of the field I have neither toiled nor spun, and it will go hard if fate put me to it now."

Seymour looked at her animated face in thoughtful admiration. Truly she was very beautiful. All the love she was capable of feeling flooded her eyes and burned on her cheek. She seemed supremely happy, and the young man believed that affection for himself alone kindled her features into superb loveliness. They sat in silence awhile. He was thoughtful and grave, though her head rested on his shoulder and the perfume of her hair swept across his face.

"I wonder if anyone ever can be perfectly happy?" he said.

"I think so," was her soft answer. "I feel so."

"When you are mine—all mine—when fate itself cannot wrest you from me, I shall know," he murmured. "When shall it be? There is no cause for delay."

"I will tell you after to-morrow," she whispered.

"But you leave town then."

"It is only a short ride on the railway."

"May I come there?"

"Yes, but not directly. There may be reasons against it that I do not know of. But close by is a public-house, where you can be comfortable for a few hours or days. On the third day from this you will find me in the grounds. There was formerly an odd little summer-house up a ravine which opens to the river: you can almost see it from the station. Wait for me there."

"I shall have but one thought till then."

"And now good-night!"

"But you will not send me away yet?"

"I must. My cousin is ill and may want me."

"Ah, this is cruel!"

"To myself most of all. She does not know of your existence, and might find you here. There! there! you hurt my hand. We shall meet again very soon."

"Not to part—say that, dear girl!"

"I hope so—I think so. But be prudent, and if necessary patient. Remember we have a whole life before us."

"A heaven, you should say."

With a dexterous touch of the finger she shot the bolt and let him out, almost delirious with mingled feelings of joy, pride, shame and regret.

(To be continued.)



[EVANGELINE'S JEALOUSY AROUSED.]

GOLDEN FAVOURS.

CHAPTER VII.

DISTRESSED and weary, after a long and fruitless struggle, Nannie wandered restlessly into the garden. It was here she met Hal returning from a thorough search into the carriage, and at the spot where Evangeline had stepped into it. He looked both relieved and perplexed at seeing her.

"You are out for the fresh air, Nannie darling. That is right. Come down here where it is dry, and you will get the sweet breath of clover from the field yonder."

He put his arm around her, in his usual free, brotherly way, and led her towards the garden. She made a movement to withdraw, and then with a weary, patient smile accepted the proffered aid, while a pink flush gathered slowly on her cheek. Hal was unusually careful of her.

He drew the shawl more closely across her chest and carefully selected the driest stones for her little feet to walk on. He had been exceedingly vexed with Nannie for giving so much distress to his beautiful Evangeline for the caprice, unkindness, or pettishness which the latter had so innocently, as he supposed, betrayed to him by means of her sensitive, wounded feelings.

"Nannie, dear," said he. "You know how many years we have wondered, and speculated, and guessed what sort of a girl she might be, this unknown Evangeline Earle. Now that you have seen her tell me what you think of her."

Nannie choked down her repugnance, and answered, gently:

"She is very beautiful, Hal; your fairy princess you used to talk about could not be more so."

"Ah, yes; everyone must acknowledge that. But her inimitable grace of manner, her charming ingenuousness, her wonderful freedom from worldliness, when she has been all her life so cosmopolite. It is these which I admire most. Is it not so with you?"

"I have seen her but once, you know, dear Hal. I cannot judge so hastily," replied Nannie, gently.

"But you will love her when you know her. You are certain of that, are you not, Nannie?"

She was silent a moment. Too truthful to reply by a deliberate falsehood, she was seeking for some innocent method of evasion.

"I am very glad that you are so satisfied and happy, Hal," said she, at length. "You may be sure that no one rejoices at that more than I. Now let us turn back to the house."

"Not yet. If you are tired [come into the arbour and sit down. I have something to tell you, and first I want to ask for your charity and forgiveness."

Her soft blue eyes dilated with wonder.

"There is nothing you could do, Hal, I think absolutely nothing, which I would not cheerfully forgive."

"But this is about someone else, dear. I am asking you not to be angry with Evangeline."

"Evangeline Earle! Has she confessed her hostility! What do you mean, Hal?" spoke Nannie, too startled to be guarded in her choice of words. "Hostility! Evangeline confess hostility! Then the sweet girl is absolutely panic-stricken at the thought of losing, or rather never obtaining, your friendship."

"Why, Nannie, it is I who should question your meaning."

Nannie bit her lip nervously, but it was impossible to unsay the words.

"Perhaps I hardly know what I mean myself. But your words were certainly very startling. I wish you would speak clearly."

"I will," replied Hal, a little angrily. "Miss Earle came to me a little while ago. She rode over thus early in the morning to beg my intercession with you, though you could not blame her one half as much as she does herself. She has lost that ring she borrowed of you, Nannie."

"Lost my mother's ring! The only token, the only clue, I hold to my unknown relatives. No, no, I cannot believe it!" exclaimed Nannie, in a bewildered tone.

And in a moment more, losing all command of herself, she burst forth, impetuously:

"She took it when she went away, and she rode directly to her home. How could she have lost it? I don't believe it! She has a reason of her own for taking it, and she did not mean I should ever see it again."

"Nannie!" exclaimed Hal, sternly, "how dare you, in my presence too? Do you know what a wicked thing you are saying?"

Nannie burst into tears.

"I know that I am miserable," she exclaimed, in a quivering voice. "Let me go away. I shall never know any more peace until I do."

"Nannie, Nannie, what evil, perverse spirit has taken possession of you? You are ungenerous, ungrateful, and resentful. You would feel shocked and ashamed could you understand how deeply Evangeline feels your coldness, how she dreads your anger at this unfortunate accident. She brought me a dozen rings, everyone worth more than the paltry thing you accuse her of stealing, and begged me to give them

to you in slight atonement for this loss. She knew you better than I, it seems. She said you would be unforgiving."

"A paltry thing! My dead mother's wedding-ring, which was my grandmother's first—a paltry thing!" repeated Nannie, with curling lips, stung only by that one expression.

"It shall be found if I move the whole town to do it!" returned Hal, hotly, "or you will be accusing my beautiful Evangeline, before other people, of being a thief."

"You will not find it, but let it pass—I can bear its loss. I have learned to bear many things within the last few hours."

"This loss; that I cannot replace," muttered Hal, stamping his feet into the moist earth; "if money would only do it I would compel her to be satisfied. Yet one would think after all these years of protection and bounty I need not feel so—"

Thus far he spoke and no farther—Nannie flung herself into his arms with a wild sob.

"No, no, I am not so ungrateful. Do not think it, Hal, do not believe it. I would do anything, no matter how hard and cruel, anything to prove how I acknowledge the great debt I owe to you and your mother. I would crush my own happiness unsparingly if I could add to yours!"

"I do not ask anything so tragical of you, Nannie," replied Hal, a little coldly, for her whole demeanour was a profound mystery to him. "I only desire that you will look upon this in a rational manner, and that you will give to my betrothed wife the respectful treatment and esteem which she deserves, even if you refuse the affection she wins from others. That much I have surely the right to claim. I do not wish to see her grieved as she was yesterday by your coldness."

Nannie drew herself hastily away from his still encircling arm.

"You shall not have cause to complain again, Hal," said she, in a thick, suffocating voice, and, in spite of his remonstrance, fled away from him into the house.

Nannie locked her chamber door and sinking upon her knees by the bedside, buried her face in the pillows.

A wan, weary, sorrowful face it was.

"Oh, heaven help us! I think we are all under an evil spell. He who was so trusting, and happy, and harmonious. But he is right, I owe them too much to refuse to conquer this involuntary horror of that girl. They shall have no farther cause of complaint, though the mask of hypocrisy crush out my very life. She shall not triumph over me. I will

rival her in seeming gaiety and merriment. I never knew before that there was so much pride in my nature, but I feel that I can rely upon it. Hal, you shall never guess what agony you have inflicted upon one who would die any time to save you from harm."

Before she had yet arisen from her knees there came a knock at her door, and Mrs. Halstead's gentle voice.

"Nannie, dearest, a strange woman is below, asking to see you. Are you ill that you have locked the door? Shall I send her away?"

"I cannot see anyone," replied Nannie. "Tell her I am ill, if you will be so good as to make my excuses to her for me."

In a few moments Mrs. Halstead returned to the door.

"The woman is very earnest, Nannie. She says she was with your mother when she died. She is sure you will remember her name. Jane Martin she calls it. She says she has a few words which she must say to you, and that she can ill afford to come again."

Nannie opened the door at the conclusion of these words.

"Send her up to me, poor thing; it was cruel to me to put her off."

The woman made her appearance immediately in response to the summons, and hurried towards the expectant girl with a face agitated enough between trepidation and earnest feeling.

"Oh, and indeed is this Miss Nannie? If it were not for your eyes, and them curls, I should never mistrust it. I remember Jane Martin, don't ye? She that lived in the room over your mother's, in the tenement?"

"I have a faint remembrance of your face, and I am glad to see you. So you have taken pains to seek me out. That was very good in you."

"Oh, no, not good, miss, not good at all; only trying to undo the bad."

Here Mrs. Martin's voice wavered a little, and she made a movement as if she wanted to fall down on her knees at Nannie's feet, only a quick, frightened gesture of the girl's restrained her.

"I've come to ask your pardon, miss. I've come to make a clean breast of the sin that's laid so heavy all these years, and never would be after lightening, let me do what I would. It was just the luck which showed me where to find ye. Oh, Miss Nannie, I have been a poor sinner. The temptation came, and I fell before it."

"I don't understand you," faltered Nannie.

"And how should ye, when ye was just like an innocent baby? But I'll tell the whole truth. I was called in by the neighbours when your mother died, and I staid and did the whole for her till the last. I was alone with the poor baby when I saw a little box in a drawer, and the Evil One himself must have tempted me, for when I opened it and saw a few pieces of silver coin, and some gold trinkets, I said to myself, 'I'll take this for spending my time here, and no one will be the wiser.' I don't wonder you look so ashamed of me. I was ashamed the minute after it was done. But the folks coming in to see to the coffin prevented me from putting it back, and I had no chance after. And I could not find the courage to make a clean breast of it. And ye were taken care of and it didn't seem so hard. And I let the years slip on and never a word did I say to any soul, but I kept the box hid. But Judy—that's my girl, miss—she's as bright and smart as any fine lady's child; she's been to school, and can read and write well. I tell you—she came across it and read the letter, and says she, 'Mother, how came you by that? It belongs to somebody who ought to think a deal of it.' Then says I, 'What does it say?' And she read it to me, and then I took my oath that if you could be found you should have the box. I've kept it, and there's the box, miss, and I only ask ye to forgive poor Jane Martin since she's repented of her evil deed. And ye're fit and I won't be after disturbing ye any more, but I wish ye good-morning and now walk away with a clean conscience."

She thrust into Nannie's hand a dingy, timeworn paper box of diminutive size, gave a series of odd little courtesies, and walked out of the room and out of the house.

Nannie sat in speechless astonishment, with a feeling of awe, something like the emotion with which one would receive a message from the grave; it was indeed of a kindred nature, for the yellow paper which fell from the box as she mechanically raised the cover, was in her mother's handwriting directed, "To my daughter."

Oh, the long pitiless years, and the more mysterious inexorable gulf which lay between that hour when the feeble fingers had traced the characters and this one when the daughter's eyes first read the words, and received the startling intelligence communicated.

Nannie read it through twice, her awed, frightened look vanishing at last before a stronger emotion.

"It is wonderful! It passes my belief, but for faith and trust in the kind Providence watching over me," she murmured, clasping her hands while the crimson flush alternately came over her face and faded away to a frightful pallor. "Most wonderful of all is it that, after these years of delay, it should arrive at this time. Mother, dear mother, give your child your holy prayers, your angel guidance."

Her head drooped forward, her lips moved without any audible words, as if in silent prayer. Then presently a glow mantled the pale face, the blue eyes shone gloriously, a bright glad smile broke over the sweet lips.

"Hal, Hal, in spite of you I will be your guardian angel. I will prove to you that I am not ungrateful. I will repay the debt I owe you. If she be worthy, if you love her, it shall not be your poor Nannie who will stand between you. Rather will she secure your happiness for you. And some time—some time—it may be after many years of chance and change in some such fashion as this, you shall know the truth and give me the respect you do not believe my due."

She looked over the trinkets, carefully examined the labels attached to these, and selecting a ring of a similar fashion to the one lost, and evidently the work of the same hand, she slipped it on her finger.

"Now, Miss Evangelina Earle, I have a test by which to try your character beyond a single question of doubt. If you are unworthy of all my thoughts so boldly accuse you of, and he still loves you on better acquaintance, you shall obtain the rich prize of Hal Halstead's heart and hand. But if you are unworthy, crafty, treacherous, beware! I hold in the hand you despise so heartily the magic spell to dash you down from your proud height. How marvellous it seems. Poor little Nannie can hold her head erect now, however sorely her heart may grieve."

CHAPTER VIII

It was more than a week after the loss of the ring before Miss Earle visited the home of the Halsteads. Then she came to remain several days, and those days almost imperceptibly lengthened into weeks. When she first saw Nannie she held out her hand with a deprecating smile.

"How will you receive me, dearest child?" said she, in the sweetest of her clear, musical tones. "I am penitent enough, I assure you. I have had such a diligent search instituted, but all in vain."

"Pray discuss the whole matter from your mind," replied Nannie, with a free, ready manner, which at once surprised and delighted Hal, who stood near them, closely listening to every word. "It is of no consequence now, because, most opportunely and delightfully, I have received a box of papers and trinkets which a poor creature was tempted into taking from my mother, but could never find it in her conscience to dispose of. She brought them to me after all these years with the most touching penitence. I valued that ring chiefly because it would have enabled me to discover something concerning my unknown relatives, if ever I should have met them. Now, however, I have another. See, there it is and made by my father's father, who also manufactured that lost one for his wife's wedding ring."

She extended her hand with the dull yellow circle of pure ore, skillfully chased into a vine of lilies, on the forefinger.

Evangelina Earle bent down to examine it, and though her voice was still melodiously smooth, there came a black frown across her forehead.

"How relieved I am, dear, sweet Nannie, you forgive me. Now we may be friends, I hope."

"It will not be my fault if it is not so," returned Nannie, composedly enduring the caress.

"Why, Nannie, I had not heard of all this," exclaimed Hal, coming forward in unaffected delight.

"Well, but you know it has only just happened. I must get you to help me examine the papers. I shall look them over myself to-morrow. I have strong hopes they will solve the singular obscurity resting upon my relatives."

"Come, Hal, you promised to show me a new rose," said Evangelina Earle, as if tired of the subject. And they went off into the garden and presently returned, the lady a charming representative of Flora, with her hands full of blossoms, and a dainty wreath resting lightly above her dark glossy ringlets. Hal held a bouquet in his hand and brought it to Nannie with a gentle smile.

"You see, dear, I did not forget you, although beneath so many enchantments my head might be well turned."

Nannie knew that the flowers were simply a thank-offering for her graciousness to his betrothed, and took them rather indifferently.

Presently she bent eagerly towards the window.

"Why, Hal, whom have we here? A gentleman is coming up the avenue on horseback. What a superb horse! What a magnificent rider!"

Hal came to the window and exclaimed, quickly:

"How pleasant! I will persuade him to remain with us. It is a French gentleman whom I met the other day, and we were mutually taken, I think, for we commenced a friendship at once. He promised to come out some time to see me. I am delighted it should happen while you are here, Evangelina. He is so extremely agreeable and entertaining."

Evangelina Earle gave a little start, but she did not look towards the window. She was perfectly self-possessioned and unconscious of any previous acquaintance when Hal came in, in triumph, introducing: "Monsieur L'Etrange, ladies; Miss Earle, Miss O'Brien, Monsieur L'Etrange."

Monsieur bent his elegant person in the most flattering way first to one lady and then to the other.

"We are all glad to see you. You must let us persuade you to remain and see if we cannot beguile your time. And presently the elegant Frenchman was chatting as freely and familiarly as if they had known him for years. After luncheon they strolled into the garden, Nannie falling to Monsieur L'Etrange, of course. Hal found him very entertaining.

There was a brilliant, polished, fascinating air about the man which was new to her, and could not fail to win her admiration. At the same time, she was conscious of an impression of hollowiness, of show, worldly lack of purity and honesty, which made her shrink away from his flustering glances and definitely expressed compliments.

"Do you know, mademoiselle, that you are most attractive to me? So—so—I cannot get the word in English—so naïve, so transparent, and yet so keen and subtle of catching expressions. Shall you be angry, or think me impudent, if I tell you that I see you half distrust me and thoroughly doubt mademoiselle's sincerity? Is it for her own sake you watch her so closely?"

"She is very beautiful," answered Nannie, with a little annoyance.

"Bah!" said monsieur, laconically; "Mademoiselle Earle puts on just the look she pleases. I call it not expression. It is Mademoiselle O'Brien's thoughts which shine out upon her face from the fervent spirit within."

Nannie instinctively spread her two delicate hands over her face.

"Nay, mademoiselle," said the Frenchman, with a wistful look of sadness, "it is too pure and holy a look to be started at espionage. Innocence like yours has an awe for world-fraught spirits. Do you know that the hardened wretch cannot look into the pure eyes of the little child, while he can most undilutely the keen gaze of the deepest villain? Pardon me, I shall not vex you again."

He reached forward, breaking off a pure white lily from its stem, and passing it to Nannie, said, with one of his infinitely elegant bows:

"Mademoiselle is like this flower, still fresh with the dew and the sunshine. Art has not despoiled her of her most winsome charms. Let her remember this, nor envy the artificial rose, however it may glow in its false brilliancy."

Nannie perceived there was a hidden meaning in these words, but did not ask for an explanation.

Just then Evangelina Earle came up to them, breaking away from Hal's eager conversation. There was an angry glitter in the dark eyes which rested mockingly on the lily in Nannie's hand, a flush on the clear cheek.

"Monsieur is saying something so pretty, I am certain. I came to hear what sentiment he gave the lily."

"N'importe, fair lady. I shall find another for you, and a different flower."

He pointed to a moss-rose bush, hiding with his handkerchief the little lurking smile of amusement around his finely cut lip. Evangelina crossed over to it with an imperious step, and seeing that Nannie was not inclined to follow, monsieur slowly passed on to her side.

"Pierre," said Evangelina, in a tone of suppressed emotion, "why have you ventured here? I charged you to keep away."

Monsieur laughed a low, musical note, which seemed to irritate her sadly.

"I wonder if it can be the virtue and innocence which we have left so far behind us that have yet a magnetic attraction. You are to marry the young gentleman. What if I should fall in love with the young lady? She is artless, and sweet, and chaste as a lily."

Evangelina bit her lip.

"Pierre," said she, fiercely, "how dare you insult me so?"

Monsieur gave a low whistle.

"Really, Mademoiselle Evangeline, this is extremely bizarre. Here am I sighing woefully for your favour, and thrown aside with the utmost sang-froid for a wealthier lover. And yet it is you who turn upon me as though I were the aggressor."

"There was a look on your face as you handed the lily to that girl which fairly irritated me."

"You flatter me. I was not aware that your attention was given this way. I find her charmingly fresh and original, and there is a depth of character too which circumstances may bring out."

"I hate her!" muttered Evangeline, with a lightning flash from her dark eyes.

Monsieur Pierre watched the flushed, angry face with a wicked sparkle of the eye.

"I am sorry for that. It will be awkward, will it not, if you marry the brother?"

Evangeline tossed her head.

"She will not be able to trouble me then; and she is no sister, but only a dependent."

But while she said it a flush of singular meaning passed across her face which monsieur puzzled over an hour afterwards.

"Well, your scrutiny was closely returned. Those innocent blue eyes followed all your movements."

At that moment Hal came forward from a shrub to which he had been directing the gardener's attention.

Evangeline glided up to him as gracious as ever, monsieur watched her a few moments with a singular blending of amusement and anger, but no trace was visible of his sentiments on his impassive face.

"There is a secret antagonism between these two women," said Monsieur Pierre, mentally. "Wherefore? It is not like Evangeline to care who the poor little thing loves, when it is only unsuccessfully, when she herself is the triumphant winner. She crosses her path in some other way. I will watch."

They were presently recalled to the house by Mrs. Halstead, and the day passed in general conversation. Monsieur L'Estrange took leave early in the evening, after accepting Mrs. Halstead's pressing invitation to return for a few days' visit that same week.

Nannie went up to her chamber as soon as monsieur's departure left her free from the drawing-room. To her surprise Evangeline followed her.

"How tired I am," said the latter, throwing herself into an easy-chair, and brushing back the falling ringlets from her forehead.

"That Monsieur L'Estrange is rather tiresome, don't you think so? Your brilliant people are always so to me."

"I found him very entertaining; but I was a little afraid of him. I can imagine him holding vehement, despotic sway over another who had once yielded to his fascination."

"Do not let us talk about him," said Evangeline, with a slight shiver; "my brain is weary with his high flights, which politeness requires me to follow. Talk to me in your sweet, soothing way, about simple things, about yourself, dear Nannie."

"A very dull subject after Monsieur L'Estrange, and one speedily exhausted. There is solittle to tell which you do not know."

"Oh, yes, there is the new history, so romantic. The box of relics you have just obtained, and papers, too, I think you said. I wonder you could delay reading them."

"I shall read them to-morrow, with Hal to help me link the clue we may thus discover," replied Nannie, with a quiet smile, and going to her dressing-case she took from it the little paper box.

"See, this dingy shell holds, mayhap, a pearl of price. There is a fascination about suspense. To-night no one knows who I am, to-morrow, it may be, like Cinderella, I shall have found a fairy spell to change me into a princess."

"Or be shut down more securely with the no-bodies," laughed Evangeline, with a bitter tinge in her tone.

She had grown singularly morose and irritable, and even her wonderful powers of self-command could not hide it. Nannie, on the contrary, had gained an unusual amount of self-possession and *nonchalance*. She fitted about her toilet duties, leaving the box lying upon the table, but not unconscious of the greedy, glowing eyes that now and then stole furtively towards it.

"So you are not going to return to the drawing-room," said Evangeline as Nannie took down from the wardrobe a white wrapper, and removed her evening dress.

"No, I think not. I shall be *de trop* for a pair of lovers, and Mrs. Halstead is fatigued and will retire early."

"I'll go down and excuse myself, and come up here and talk a little before retiring," said the visitor, as if newly inspired with the idea, and she glided out and was gone but a moment. Nannie smiled quietly as she sat down and awaited her return.

"We shall see. I shall know now beyond a doubt; but I need for myself no farther assurance," she murmured.

Evangeline came from her own chamber in a soft pink cashmere wrapper, her dark glossy ringlets unbound, her cheeks a vivid scarlet, her eyes shining like diamonds.

"What a magnificent creature," thought Nannie, and sighed.

"Now we will chat till we are sleepy. Tell me the moment I weary you, dear, and I'll slip away to my own chamber. How your hair shines in this light! It is golden enough for a painter's *auréole*. You're a pretty creature, Nannie. I wonder Hal didn't fall in love with you."

"That was left for your fortunate lot," answered Nannie, forcing her tone to be gay and careless.

"What a plump little hand, and as fair as the lily monsieur gave you to-day. These Frenchmen have such *bizarre* ways. Oh, you're not going to wear that heavy ring to-night, are you? It's an evil omen to sleep with such a fetter. Put it into the box and spare yourself further misfortune."

Nannie smiled again, in that serene, quiet way of hers, and moving the ring from her finger went to the box and the dull sound of its fall echoed through the room.

"How about the lily?" suggested Evangeline.

"Really, I did not take enough notice of the remark to remember, and if I had, Miss Earle, it would be scarcely becoming for me to repeat it here."

"Miss Earle! Oh, now you are vexed with me, and I must run away before I say anything more to offend." *Bon soir, Mademoiselle O'Brien.*

Nannie knelt down, repeating her prayers with solemn fervency, shed a few quiet tears and lay calmly down to sleep.

Evangeline Earle, after extinguishing her candle, paced restlessly to and fro for more than an hour—her long curls swaying against her hot, scarlet cheeks, her eyes blazing through the dimness with angry light.

"If Pierre fail to leave the note given him at Tanglewood, or if they should blunder there, the whole thing is undone. But no, it will not happen. Why should it? Tanglewood is on the way to town, my uncle will surely be at home, and if he read the note it will be all safe. Pshaw! I am nervous to-night. How I hate that girl! It grows upon me, so that every word I give her costs me a pang. I think our stars must have crossed each other's track at the hour of our birth. Even if it were no gain to me I should wish her to lose. He was detestable enough before, but now I see as plainly as possible what will come, I read it in Pierre's eyes."

She is just the sort of girl to win him to genuine love. And it is only a feverish passion, a magnetic attraction that I have exercised. Perdition! to be thus bound by these eddies of circumstance, I must not do without that fortune, I cannot do without it, nor can I bear to lose Pierre's love. I wonder if that girl is asleep yet. Little does her weak nature know how blood like mine can boil and seethe. And somewhere, deep in my heart, something is asking feebly if it were not better to be in her place—if it is worth the while to bear all this fretting, and fuming, and scheming. Oh, Pierre, Pierre, if I did not know how speedily your passion would cool in the uncongenial atmosphere of poverty, if I were not sure that you would grow to despise me, and that I should learn to hate you with an intensity akin to this vehement, passionate love of mine, I would go out with you to-morrow and leave them in peace, and finding some sunny home put on a peasant's dress and be happy in cooking your meals and tending your children. Oh, the picture looks so bright and tempting to my sight. But I know it is a mocking one. Neither your nature nor mine could endure such a pastoral bliss. Who that has fed on passion or intoxication must continue the draught or perish. *Allons, allons!* What ails me to-night? What has shaken my spirits so? The look of Pierre as he gave the lily. Ah, that would be retribution indeed if this girl win my Pierre's love away from me. But how I rave. It must not be—it shall not be! Let me call back my coolness. Let to-night's work be carried out successfully and I will manage that the girl is removed from her place in this house."

These thoughts swayed fiercely through her excited brain, and quickened the pulses to fever heat. Presently she went to the marble basin and dashed a cool flood over her face and held her wrists under water, which seemed to give relief. Then wrapping a shawl over her dressing gown, she sat down in the easy-chair and dozed away the lagging hours till midnight.

At that hour a low but distinct bird-note echoed under the trees close by the house. Softly raising her window, she answered it in still more subdued tones, and then hurried stealthily out of the chamber. She returned again speedily, and then from the

window throw a small bundle which she had tied into her handkerchief to the dark figure waiting there. This little episode ended she returned to her bed and slept soundly. The next morning the family were struck with consternation by the information which Miss Earle gave at the breakfast-table. Her diamond ear-rings and breast-pin were gone from the dressing-table where she had laid them. Nannie very quietly remarked that she also had met with a loss. The box which contained her mother's trinkets and the all-important papers were missing.

"Has a thief been in the house?" asked the indignant Hal.

Investigation showed the tracks of a man up to the window of the room next to Miss Earle's. The window likewise was found to be open, when the chambermaid was positive she had closed it for the night. On all sides it was conceded that a bold and very singular robbery had been committed.

CHAPTER IX.

MONSIEUR PIERRE L'ESTRANGE sauntered up to the veranda, leading his horse by the bridle, at an early hour the next morning. He found an excited group gathered there.

Evangeline Earle, in a cool white India muslin, with a knot of scarlet ribbon fastening the lace ruffle at her fair throat, a broad scarlet sash fluttering down the skirt, and a glowing cluster of geranium blossoms in her black hair, flashed upon him as brilliantly as a meteor. Her cheeks matched the trimmings, they were so feverishly bright, and her eyes were like stars. As he held out his hand to her Monsieur Pierre said to himself he had never seen her so dazzlingly beautiful, while Hal watched every motion like one entranced.

She had the fairy gift, instinctive with some women, as well as the marvellous French tact of always having some vivid bit of colour about her, either in flower, ribbon, or jewellery, which set off and harmonized with the rest of her costume, lending just the needed grace to insure perfection of toilet.

She had meant to be bewildering and magnificent without the aid of her diamonds when she appeared to the family that morning, and she had succeeded. Nevertheless, Monsieur Pierre's practised eye detected the hidden feverishness of spirit, the studied arrangement of posture, tone, and speech, and he turned with a relief and satisfaction, almost startling to himself, to the carelessly free and natural girlish figure in the cambric robe, a white ground, with little blue sprigs scattered thickly over it, to the calm, innocent blue eyes and guileless countenance of Nannie.

"You should have remained with us last night," said Hal, after the first words of greeting were over. "Who knows but you might have seen the villain, for certainly you would have occupied that vacant room. What will you say when I tell you we had a robber here last night? It is quite a romantic affair, but extremely provoking."

"Tell me about it. I see that the most precious treasures are safe. He spared the young ladies. What have you lost?"

"It was precisely the young ladies that were not spared!" And Hal related the circumstances, concluding, in a tone of genuine feeling: "It is for Nannie's loss I grieve most deeply. Evangeline's diamonds shall be replaced by more valuable ones in good time, but the contents of Nannie's box no one can replace. It is very unfortunate, especially after the loss of the other ring; so tantalizing too that the papers had not been examined. I must admit that Nannie bears it better than I should."

Monsieur looked over to Nannie.

She was bending down, twisting a branch of honeysuckle across the lattice, so that her face was hidden from observation. In withdrawing the glance his eye accidentally caught a swiftly passing excitant spark leaping from the brilliant black orbs of Evangeline Earle.

"*Ma foi*," soliloquized the Frenchman, "here is a trial of some sort. What game is up now? *Mon ami*, I must have a look after you."

He went over to Mrs. Halstead at the parlour window and soon had possession of all the facts concerning the loss of the ring Miss Earle had borrowed, and of the last night's mysterious robber, as well as the particulars which explained why the loss of that box and its contents was irreparable for Nannie.

Monsieur listened earnestly, and mentally thought over the facts with his acute, subtle method of reasoning.

He found occasion before evening to say to Evangeline, in a guarded voice, with his inimitable coolness of manner:

"Mademoiselle Evangeline, do I come in for any share of the plunder, and am I exempt from the dangers of discovery?"

She compelled her features to remain calm, though the colour flushed still more hotly on her cheek, and returning his steady glance, unflinchingly replied:

"I do not understand you."

"*Mon ami*, it will do for these people. Your tact and your management, I confess, are admirable, but to continue the counterfeit with me is absurd. It would be diamond cut diamond with a vengeance."

"I repeat, Pierre, that I do not know what you are talking about."

"You are *bel esprit*, *mon ami*, but you must admit that I am something near your mark, at least. Have you not said that what I take the trouble to analyze always becomes clear to me? I took a note for you last night. I left it in Monsieur Dacus's hands."

"Well, what of that? I had a rare plant in my boudoir, and I was afraid it would be neglected. I sent word to have it cared for. I think you are a little *bizarre* this morning, Pierre."

Saying which, in a slightly contemptuous tone, she turned away, went up to Hal, and began a merry conversation.

Monsieur Pierre walked a turn or two down the garden walk, whistling in his odd way.

"Just as you please, mademoiselle," said he. "Since you try to blind me I consider myself challenged to ferret out the truth. I'll take a ride over to Tanglewood this evening, and inquire about the cherished plant."

Whereupon he turned himself about, and, joining the group on the veranda, made himself the life and centre of the family circle; so that no one could have imagined a serious problem was all the while being worked over in his acute, trenchant brain.

"I must take a ride over to the town before returning," said he to Hal, in a careless tone. "There's a good fellow, just over from Paris, who wants my recommendation to get a situation as a valet. I promised him to call on the gentleman, who agreed to be home at a rather late hour. I won't disappoint poor Adolph, who will be in despair if I do not make my appearance. It will give me a sharp ride, but I shall enjoy it. I'll show myself early in the morning."

Accordingly, the glossy black horse was brought round from the stable, and Monsieur Pierre rode off in the moonlight.

Very graceful and gallant did he look as he waved his hand in token of good-bye—his fine erect figure sitting like a centaur on the noble animal.

Leaning against the pillar, secure in the shadow and dimness, Evangeline Earle followed it, till the arching boughs of the pines hid it from sight, with weary, wistful eyes, while a bitter smile hovered over her lips.

Little enough she guessed the errand on which he was bound. Artful and adroit as she was with these simple people among whom fate seemed to have cast her for a time, she had no power to fathom the wily, powerful nature of Monsieur Pierre. He was right when he said manœuvring with him, was folly and absurdity. She met her master that delicious hour in a Parisian park when first Monsieur Pierre's melodious voice poured its subtle flattery into her willing ear.

(To be continued.)

SCIENCE.

PROFESSOR W. THOMPSON calculated that heat is radiated from the sun at a rate not more than from fifteen to forty times as high as that at which heat is generated on the grate-bars of a locomotive furnace, per equal areas.

ONE HUNDRED cubic inches of dry air, under the ordinary atmospheric pressure of 30, in and at the temperature of 16 deg. Cent., weigh 31 grains. The same volume of carbonic acid gas, under the same circumstances, weighs 47.25 grains; 100 cubic inches of hydrogen weighing 2,114 grains.

THE elevation of the surface of Lake Superior above the sea is 600 ft., that of the other upper lakes 578 ft.; yet their great depth places their beds, except that of Lake Erie, below the surface of the ocean. These immense reservoirs, Lake Ontario included, contain nearly one half of the known fresh water on the globe.

THE REASON OF A CENTRAL FIRE.—A piece of granite appears, at first sight, to be amongst the hardest substances we meet with. If, however, we take a small sphere of granite, and strike it violently against a blackened anvil, we shall find that on the sphere of granite there will not merely be a black spot, marking the point where the sphere met the anvil, but a small black circular mark, showing that the round granite ball had flattened itself against the anvil. Thus we see that the force of the blow has compressed the granite; and if that force had been continued the granite would have remained in smaller compass. Now, when we consider the enormous

pressure there will be on the interior parts of our globe owing to the weight of the upper parts, it is easy to see that, even if of granite (and we have reason to believe that granite is the chief material), they will be pressed into much smaller space than they would occupy on the surface; so the amount of matter in a cubic foot at the centre of our globe will be many times as great as in a cubic foot at the surface. Now, we know the size of our globe, and calculating how the weight of each part compresses that which is below it, we find that the amount of matter in our globe will be much more than twice that in a sphere of granite of the same size. There must, then, be something which prevents the interior parts being condensed so much as they otherwise would be by the pressure upon them. Now, the only power that we know which would effect this is heat, and a sufficient heat, by its tendency to expand, would sufficiently counteract the impression produced by the superincumbent weight. We are thus led to believe that the interior of our globe is at a very high temperature.

THE CHANGES OF THE BODY.

THE body is not a changeless mechanism like the steam-engine. No instant of its existence finds it the same as it was the instant before. It is taking birth and growing, it is decaying away and dying, in each second of its life. Every organ and structure of it, every fibre and cell, is informed with the mystery of life, and lives, subject to the common life of the whole.

We do not know what life is, and the more prudent among us do not dare to guess, but there are certain things about it which we may safely venture to assert. Whatever it be, it is certainly no creator of matter or force. All the matter of the body is matter identical with that which we find in inorganic nature, and all its force is identical with that which comes from the sun as heat, or which holds the stars in their courses as gravitation. The operations of the body, both internal and external, are operations of chemical and physical force, and all that there is peculiar in organic life arises from the conditions under which force is exerted.

Bearing these truths in mind, we will proceed to study a little more closely the mode in which food is disposed of in the body. In the mouth it is masticated, in the stomach it is digested in the absorbent system it is elaborated, and finally, after many highly complex processes, it is poured into the blood. Of some of these processes we know a little, though only a little, but of the final process by which the now liquid food changes into that most wonderful of liquids, the blood, we know next to nothing. That it does change is certain, and accordingly we next find the food as a clear yellow liquid in which float myriads of tiny red globules. This is the blood. The globules have the power of combining with the oxygen which they meet in the passage of the blood through the lungs, and also of imparting that oxygen to any substances whose affinity for it is sufficiently active. Hence incessant oxidation is going on in the blood throughout the whole of its course. A great portion of the food is oxidized in this way, and here it is—in the blood—that the heat of the body is developed. The blood-vessels are the furnaces of the blood, the blood furnishing at the same time the fuel and the oxygen.

Even in the blood, however, the food does not come to the end of its work, all the tissues of the body, all its bones, muscles, and nerves, are undergoing, as we have before remarked, incessant decomposition and destruction. This is a continuous process, which appears to go on at all times, whether the part or organ be working or not. It is not yet quite certain whether the active working of a tissue does or does not affect the rate at which it decomposes; but, at present, the probability seems to be that it does not make much difference. As the tissue disintegrates it loses its vital character, becomes oxidized, and is removed from the body, partly in the form of gas, through the lungs and skin, and partly in the form of liquid, through the kidneys.

It has long been a debated question whether the tissues combine directly with oxygen, or whether they are first decomposed into simpler substances—these being carried into the blood and there oxidized. The latter we believe to be the more probable view; but whichever be accepted there can be no doubt that the tissues are oxidized, and that the oxidized products are removed from the body through the agency of the blood. To compensate for this waste a constant supply of new material is needed for the repair of the tissues, and this supply is drawn from the blood, and so ultimately from the food.

GAZEOL AND WHOOPING-COUGH.—The efficacy of the vapours evolved in the purifying-chambers of gas-works has been frequently alluded to as a cure for whooping-cough, and the number of recoveries recorded is certainly overwhelming. Still there

have been obstinate cases, and even some in which the patients actually got worse instead of being relieved; circumstances which led several practitioners to condemn the remedy altogether, until Dr. Durin Dubuisson succeeded in explaining the cause of this extraordinary difference in the results. He has shown by reliable experiments: 1. That the proportion and composition of the gaseous substances evolved are never the same in different gas-works. 2. That the beneficial gases are mixed up with deleterious ones, the latter even preponderating in some instances; and 3. That even in the same gas-works the proportions change according to the hour of the day. To obviate these inconveniences Dr. Durin Dubuisson has composed a liquid, which he calls gazeol, and which in evaporating, which it does very rapidly in a water-bath, will fill a close chamber with all the beneficial emanations for which gas-works are recommended. Thus, several children are admitted into a room 25 ft. long by 10 ft. in breadth, and 14 ft. in height; a teaspoonful of gazeol is introduced into an open phial, which is put into a water-bath, always kept at the same temperature. The ammoniacal emanations thus produced may occasionally affect the patients disagreeably, but the only precaution to be taken is to keep them away from the phial. The operation is performed three times a day at the Orphan Asylum at Paris. At first it was only tried in cases of a common or of a whooping-cough, but it has since been found extremely useful in catarrhal bronchitis. In the first place it weakens the intensity of the cough very materially; it prevents it during the whole time the patients inhale the emanations, and it prevents its returning in fits afterwards. It has not been found beneficial in bronchitis dependent on miliary tuberculosis and in tubercular consumption; but cases of catarrhal bronchitis have been cured in from six to twelve days, instead of requiring a month or two's treatment.

IN 1803 M. de Zach was having powder signals made on the summit of the Brocken, in the Harz, for the determination of differences of longitude. Observers stationed on the Kenlenberg, more than sixty leagues distant, saw the flash of from six to eight ounces of powder, fired in the open air for each signal, although the Brocken itself, by reason of the earth's figure, cannot be seen from the Kenlenberg.

PRINTING BY ELECTRICITY.—There is now on trial, at the chief office of the London District Telegraph Company, in Cannon Street, a telegraph instrument which, in point of detail and result, appears to be the nearest approach to simplicity and perfection hitherto available for public or private use. It is a printing instrument, producing letters printed in ordinary type by means of pressing small keys bearing the respective letters. It is worked by a combination of clockwork and electricity, and has now been in use for some weeks without a single derangement.

GUNS OF NATIONS.—In Holland the largest gun would seem to be a 66-pounder muzzle-loader, fired with the low charge of 6½ lb. The Italian guns are all muzzle-loaders, the largest being a 212-pounder, for which the ordinary charge is 24 lb. The Spanish guns are all cast-iron muzzle-loaders, their most formidable gun being a 319-pounder, of nearly 16 in. bore. Egypt is believed to have no larger rifled gun than a muzzle-loading 24-pounder, and is thus without any heavy artillery. The largest rifle gun in use in France is a breech-loader of 10½ in. bore, throwing a projectile of 496 lb. with a charge of 55 lb., or only one-ninth the weight of the shot. Ordnance of this class are used for coast defence. For sea and garrison service the French use a breech-loader of about 9 in. calibre, throwing a 318-lb. projectile with a charge of 44 lb., or one-seventh the weight of the shot. In Russia the majority of the guns are breech-loading, made of Krupp's steel. The most powerful is a 9-in., which throws a 270-lb. shot with a charge of 40 lb., or nearly one-seventh the weight of the shot. The Russians employ also what no other nation appears to have obtained—viz., a powerful rifled mortar. In this country great interest is excited on this subject, and several experiments have been made with a view to the determination of suitable patterns. Switzerland, Sweden, and Norway are believed to have no artillery above the class of field-guns.

RED-TAPE.—Although rope-yarn is manufactured at 11l. 10s. per ton cheaper at Chatham with the improved machinery than at the Royal dockyards under the old system, yet, incredible as the statement may appear, the manufacture is to be carried on at the other dockyards, while at Chatham it is to be discontinued, and the workmen discharged, although the latter were given to understand that their services were permanently required.



[“AM I CASH OR BARTER?”]

CASH OR BARTER.

I REGARDED my aunt Eliza attentively. Perfectly skilled in worldly lore, she had promised that I should enjoy the full benefit of her wisdom, without tasting that bitter fruit of experience, which she declared had “hardened” her into a woman of the world at bare twenty.

She was not a hard-looking woman, however. Her features were delicately cut, and there was a lingering trace of what might have been once a sensitive nature about the mouth. I could easily conceive my aunt Eliza as being singularly attractive in certain moods, when whatever was best in her nature should gain the ascendancy—this was not the case just now, however.

She had writing-materials before her, and was making out a list for her winter’s receptions.

I listened with attention. I was new to everything; arrived from a quiet little country town, where I had led the simplest of home-lives. At first I had been dazzled. It took me a week to regain the full possession of faculties bewildered by the glittering, restless vortex of society, into which I found myself plunged from the moment of my arrival.

Stephen had said to me, as he shook hands for good-bye, just as the train was starting:

“Lady-bird, you are going to leave me for a while; but I can trust your memory—you’ll not forget old friends. And, for the rest, you are to tell me exactly what you think of the world, after you have made acquaintance with the same.”

I nodded—there was no time for reply; then the train whirled me to my destination, and I had been in a whirl ever since. This morning, however, I had managed to put on my “thinking-cap,” and

meant to find out what was the intention, and what their value.

“Now, girls,” said my aunt, “I must get this list made out as soon as possible, and I want you to help me. Of course, your cousin Janie can’t help us, because she doesn’t know who’s who, or what’s what yet. Never mind,” nodding at me with her cool, business-like air, “you’ll learn fast enough what is *comme il faut*.”

Laura and Marion, my cousins, took positions on either side of my aunt, and the three plunged into discussion.

My aunt rapidly dashed down a dozen names and then read them off.

“Of course, girls, those people are taken for granted. Now come some of the debatable folks. There are the Pendletons—shall I put down their names?”

“Why, of course, ma,” said Laura. “I don’t care much about the girls, but you know Robert Pendleton is very nice, and he likes me, and you see it looks well to have admirers.”

My aunt looked at her daughter—brilliant of complexion, coldly and steadily handsome, and eighteen—why should she not have admirers?

“The Pendletons,” repeated my aunt as she wrote the name on her list. “Now for the Harrises. They’ve given up society since their father failed, but then we’ve always been acquainted.”

“And you know Sarah Harris plays exquisitely, ma,” adds Marion.

“Yes, to be sure,” and down goes the Harris name.

I listened to this and much more of the same sort, still keeping on my thinking-cap. By the time my aunt had completed her list I had learned the principle thoroughly, I fancied, upon which society is

conducted. The secret can be expressed in a little sentence of three words—Cash or Barter. Am I not right? The first dozen names my aunt had written on her list, without demur, were cash, the others were barter. To pass current you must be either ready money or have something equivalent thereto.

“Very well, Janie Moss,” I thought, addressing myself, “which are you, Cash or Barter?” With my thinking-cap on I went upstairs.

I did a very natural thing at once, looked in the glass. A young, fresh-looking face, plenty of red-brown hair, nice teeth, a tolerable figure, my own, not the mantua-maker’s, that was all. By no means a beauty—never a belle—and I hadn’t an accomplishment, fashionably speaking, to bless myself with. Since I wasn’t Cash, then I must be Barter. So far so good. *Courage, mon ami*; let’s see how the world will serve you. I waited with patience.

My aunt’s first reception came. Feeling myself to be Barter, I had said, beforehand:

“Aunt Eliza, if I can help you in any way let me know.”

“You dear little pet. Will you see that the silver is properly polished? I know of old what a thorough housekeeper you are, and if you will see that the girls, Laura and Marion, look neat, you know; you give them the finishing touches, and don’t let them quarrel—they will do it once and awhile, and it makes them look rnamiable, and if there’s anything else you can do, Janie dear, just attend to it without asking me, for I am worried to death.”

My aunt looked “worried”—she was apt to do so when expecting company, until they came, then she was as serene as a summer’s day—no cares, no anxieties. Servants the best in the world, house perfectly arranged, her daughters lovely, accomplished. My aunt was a woman of the world, and the world accepted her. If the glitter was not gold, no matter, it served the purpose.

I saw that the silver was polished until I could see my face in it. Well, it might have been a handsomer one, certainly; but still a very sweet voice whispered me that one man named Stephen—no matter for the surname, he was always Stephen to me—thought it the pleasantest he had ever seen.

The silver polished to perfection, I went to see how my cousins were progressing. I was just in time. Matters were becoming decidedly lively; Laura and Marion both wanted the pier-glass at once.

“Janie, isn’t it abominable?” they both exclaimed. “Neither of us ready. We both want the glass. Oh, if ma would only permit us a maid!” exclaimed Laura, the eldest, with tears in her eyes.

“I’m your maid,” said Janie Moss, with the best grace she could assume.

I set to work, crimped Laura’s hair without burning her, and did Marion’s curls, added the “finishing touches” to both toilets. When the whole was completed the effect was fine.

Laura kissed me on one cheek and Marion on the other. One had a “set of garnets” she would lend me, the other proffered me cobwebs in the guise of lace. I shook my head at both and went to my room.

I dressed myself with care, according to custom, and the result was the same as usual. My aunt would not be ashamed of me, that was all. Then I went downstairs into the drawing-room.

Aunt Eliza smiled and beckoned me to her.

“Janie, you look sweet. The rest will be exotics. You will show like a daisy flower among them all.”

“What more can I do for you, Aunt Eliza?” was my sole reply.

“Oh! just talk to the people that have nobody else to talk to them; make *yourself* at home with them, and make them feel so.”

I obeyed instructions to the letter. From my childhood I had a singular penchant for corners. Apart from the bustle there are always nice little niches, where you’ll be likely to find the choicest company of any.

I found it so, at all events. I courted the corners. The first society I came upon was that of a sweet-faced, elderly lady, who had passed her girlish days in my dear little town where everybody knew each other.

We had a cosy chat; two or three other corner people edged up to us. One, a timid little lady, that couldn’t dance, and who was afraid to talk; likewise a diffident young man, who had come with the bashful damsel, and who was situated “similarly likewise.” Somehow we all drew one another out.

The timid little lady began to laugh at her own embarrassment; her escort, encouraged, grew witty;

the sweet-faced, elderly lady smiled upon us all with motherly delight.

In the midst of our chatter a somewhat languid voice declared:

"Upon my word, you seem to be the happiest people in the room."

It was not a person who belonged to our corner who said this. If he had gravitated there it must have been in obedience to the laws of contrast. The face was brilliant, but the air *bleu*—it was Egerton De Sayres. I had seen him before at my aunt's, his name had been the first on her list. He was Very Ready Cash.

The timid little lady and her escort melted into the crowd; Mr. De Sayres dropped into their place, for he seemed to take up as much room in his languid inattention as both of them.

"Miss Moss, are you a statue, that you should place yourself in this corner and become a fixture here?"

"Sir, do I look statuesque? The classics would hardly find me a place, I think. Statues ought not to hold the sole monopoly of corners, they are too charming for that."

"Which—the corners or the statues?"

"Both, but more especially the corners; those I have liked from a child."

"Well, this is a charming corner, any way," went on Mr. De Sayres. "I think I shall cultivate it for the rest of the evening."

"How long is it since Mr. De Sayres has developed a taste for wall-flowers?"

"Oh! I like them always when they're violets!" He was a graceful gentleman was Mr. De Sayres; could express a great deal with his manner, which was as polished as my aunt's silver just now.

We talked after that—my sweet-faced, elderly lady protected us both from remark. By-and-by my companion grew in earnest—fire came into his languid mien—results of travel, of study, of worldly-wise systems of men and things were at my command.

Having nothing to venture and nothing to lose, I was mistress of my resources; I acquitted myself with credit.

An hour afterwards I was making the tour of the room upon Mr. De Sayres's arm. My aunt looked over to me and nodded approbation.

My escort was courteous, devoted, as he well could be. I received his gallantries with the quiet self-assurance of one who feels herself entitled to homage.

When the evening was over I retired to my room, laughing inwardly. The last words my aunt had said were:

"Brave little Janie; really, you acquitted yourself with credit. Laura and Marion might both take lessons from you in *aplomb*. I shall have to promote you from the corners."

I knew what my aunt thought of me in her heart—an *intrigue*, feigning simplicity in order better to carry out her plans. Very well; I could afford to be misunderstood, since one true heart comprehended the real depths of my woman's nature!

The next evening Mr. De Sayres, with a choice bouquet for "Miss Janie," he had dropped the Miss Moss as too formal.

It was really an exquisite thing he tendered me, not a pyramid, like a set speech got ready beforehand. It might have been culled in Woodlands, so dainty were the flowers—violets, forget-me-nots, and quivering fern leaves.

"I were but little grateful could I say how much," murmured Janie Moss, bowing above the bouquet.

"You like it, then? I wouldn't trust the florist, but selected the flowers myself and dictated their arrangement."

Then we began to talk. I liked to do so with Egerton De Sayres. But it was only that chilly pleasure one finds in conversation when merely the intellect is gratified, while the heart pines for wholesome food.

Would I go with him to see the statue of Zenobia then being exhibited? It was "really wonderful what women could accomplish. Do you know, Miss Janie," taking my hand very tenderly, "that I think your fingers are fine enough to shape a statue, paint a picture, pen a poem!"

I looked at my fingers, they were chubby digits that seemed to me much better suited for moulding pastry, manipulating cake, and other purely household pursuits.

I refrained from saying what I thought, however, and cast down my eyes demurely.

I listened with attention, and my companion was sufficiently flattered by my attentive attitude to let all errors pass.

"I shall come," he said at parting, "to all your aunt's receptions. Remember, I am a fixture as long as you remain."

My aunt, Laura, and Marion, all were watching me, though, having eyes, they saw not—I was puzzling them all.

"Young ladies," said my aunt Eliza one morning at breakfast, "you are all getting too flippant. I'm afraid I shall have three fairs on my hands."

"I am not a flirt, Aunt Eliza," answered I, looking the speaker straight in the eyes.

Laura and Marion laughed. "Well, we know who is one, then!"

"Yes, so do I. Miss Moss, from the country, has not been in contact with a fresh, manly heart these five years for nothing. I cannot tell diamonds from paste, it may be; but I do know a false heart from a sincere one."

My aunt looked puzzled, somewhat discomfited, then went on:

"Oh, yes! we all admire sincerity, of course; and it is easy to see, Janie, that you understand padding your own canoe, as the phrase is. But that's not the point. The Academy of Design opens to-night, and I intend to clipper you there; so make yourself wise about pictures."

Laura and Marion pouted slightly, and began to talk of other engagements. Aunt Eliza was peremptory, however.

"Who is to be our escort, mamma?" questioned the two.

Aunt Eliza looked mysterious, then smiled. I caught her smile with another, and traced the mystery back to her. I had overheard her making the arrangement with Mr. De Sayres the night before.

"Janie Moss, you are to look your prettiest to-night," said my aunt, sailing into my room just before the time for starting.

"Yes, Aunt Eliza."

"Is there nothing I can lend you to wear?"

"Nothing in the world. See what a pretty head-dress!"

I held up a half-wreath of exquisite autumn leaves. Stephen had sent them to me in a letter that very day; he had "gathered them in the woods," he said, wondering if I would not come back "before the leaves were quite fallen."

I had written immediately that I would return "before the branches were bare," and that I meant to wear the leaves he had chosen as my colours.

My aunt took the coronal in her hand and admired it. She was a woman of taste.

I fastened the leaves across my hair.

"There," she said, "heads powdered with diamond-dust and all kinds of absurdities will be there to-night. But I can guess who will admire your simple wreath of autumn leaves most of any."

I sighed softly. My aunt heard, and misunderstood. She turned in the door-way, lifted her finger expressively, and said, in her tones curiously marked at times:

"Janie Moss, I made this arrangement to-night expressly for your benefit. If you play your cards well—and that you are sure to do—you will win the game. He is simply infatuated."

I made no answer; let events explain themselves. I am not sure that it was right to be reticent; but if I had made explanations a mile in length I should still have been misunderstood; there were no real points of contact between my aunt, my cousins, or myself. When this is the case words are wasted. I have read somewhere a brief but brilliant essay upon things it is useless to explain. In fact, I never did approve of words, it is really our actions that speak for us best of all.

The marble building, that touched the street in which it stood with all lovely memories of Venetian art, rose fair in the white light of the November moon.

"See," said Mr. De Sayres, touching my hand, "is it not a triumph of architecture?"

I did not answer. Was it a fit of bashfulness? He took my hand, that chose to be passive, and drew it through his arm.

"Remember," he said, "you are to belong to me entirely this evening; and, if you consent, thereafter."

This was said in a tone so low that I imagined rather than heard it.

There was a brave display of pictures and people within. I think, though, that each looked at the other rather than at the lovely landscapes and sweet faces that shone down from the walls, touched with all grace of colouring—for England's best artists were represented here to-night.

And yet, cry out against this you who will, it is but natural. "The proper study of mankind is

man." Pictures and statuary are graceful and beautiful, but they only simulate the real. So long as hearts throb with human blood, so long shall we be more interested in the living world around us than in the shades that people the colder realms of art. We are too hard upon one another, too much lettered by false dilettantism.

Rather the frank eye and the frank tongue that says, "I go simply to see my kind," than the flimsy pretence that professes to worship art, yet knows nothing of its deep, sacred meaning.

I thought this to myself, because I saw how hollow the exclamations of many were, and how stereotyped the sentences in which the crowd praised or blamed.

"Come, you are tired of all this," said my escort, and found me a seat apart, where marble groups arose in white harmonious symmetry.

"Janie," he said, "what strange bond of sympathy is there between us? It seems as if we ought to spend our lives together."

This was more than I could endure. He to call me "Janie," and in that fashion. If I had been a silly little moth, however, it would have been but fair that I should get my wings singed, just a little, to pay for my folly.

"Stop, Mr. Egerton De Sayres!" I burst forth, after a second's pause; "this has gone far enough. You know better than I can tell you the man you are. I understand you, however, from the first. You thought to break a country heart for pastime. I had never met a finished man of society such as I saw you to be. I wished to investigate you, to understand the value of that which you represented—to weigh the coin that passes so current everywhere. I might as well be plain; you know that to love a woman such as I am, just for herself, would be for you impossible."

"You do me wrong," said Mr. De Sayres, wincing slightly, yet speaking with a show of feeling.

"No," returned I, with determination. "It is as well for you to hear the truth at once. My heart was meant for something better than a plaything. Mr. De Sayres, there are nobler occupations for a man, believe me, than this silly game society plays, in which vanity holds the trump-card, and where the winner loses always."

"Loose, Miss Moss? How?"

"With the empty triumph of winning that which, gained, is never prized. Will it pay, Mr. De Sayres, for the womanhood defaced, the manhood soiled and mangled?"

"Hardly, Miss Moss."

"I am going home to-morrow, sir. Let me leave a lesson with you. You will have learned there are women that only genuine, manly worth can win. I shall have learned to hold through all the coming years, be they many or few, the value of the truest heart that ever beat."

"Oh! you are—"

"Yes," said I, not suffering the sentence to be finished. "Now take me back to my aunt."

Mr. De Sayres complied with my request, and returned with me, wearing a very sober face.

"She has been reading me such a lecture, madam," declared he to my aunt.

Not caring to show she was discomfited, my aunt said, simply:

"I trust you will improve upon it, Mr. De Sayres."

"I trust I shall," compressing his lips, and raising his eyebrows.

"I must leave to-morrow," I told my aunt that night. "You and the girls must be sure to come and spend the summer with us?"

"By all means," rejoined Aunt Eliza, promptly.

"You know we all love the country in the summer-time, not to speak of its being so altogether out of date for anybody who is anybody to stay in town at that time."

The girls were "delighted," too. They had enjoyed the last summer they had spent with us so much. So you see it was a satisfactory barter on all sides.

Stephen met me at the station.

"You look just the same, lady-bird, only a trifle soberer or wiser, it may be."

"Yes, Stephen, I am wiser with a very sad, new wisdom."

"What is the matter, little Janie? Have you been trying to solve that troublesome problem—society?"

"Yes, Stephen, and I have found out the solution."

"Well, what is that?"

"Oh, it all means, or, at all events, the finale is—Cash or Barter."

"Pure selfishness, then, is the governing motive

of the bright, gay world you have been testing during your absence?"

"Pure selfishness, Stephen."

"And yet," looking at me with envious wistfulness, "there might be one kind of barter you owe to somebody that wouldn't be selfishness."

For once, at all events, one woman was open as sunlight. I have seen enough of schemes to make me in love with truth evermore.

"I know what you mean, dear. I have your heart, you shall have mine to keep for ever, an' so it please you."

And this fair exchange has been the most blessed, beautiful event that has happened to me in my whole lifetime.

G. L.

EX-CHIEF BARON POLLOCK.

THEY tell a capital story of the Chief Baron; that one who wished him to resign waited on him, and hinted at it, and suggested it, for his own sake, entirely with a view to the prolongation of his valued life, and so forth. The old man arose, and said, with his grim, dry gravity, "Will you dance with me?" The guest stood aghast as the Lord Chief Baron, who prides himself particularly upon his legs, began to caper about with a certain youth-like vivacity. Seeing his visitor standing surprised, he capered up to him, and said, "Well, if you won't dance with me, will you box with me?" And with that he squared up to him; and half in jest, half in earnest, fairly boxed him out of the room. The old Chief Baron had no more visitors anxiously inquiring after his health and courteously suggesting retirement.

The Lord Chief Baron was prone to the expression of strong general views, which he conveyed in a manner eminently characteristic, with an idiomatic vigour and originality almost amusing. "If," said he, on one occasion—"If every man were to take advantage of every occasion to have 'the law' of his neighbour, life would not be long enough for the litigation which would result. *All flesh and blood would be turned into plaintiffs and defendants!*" The reader must imagine this uttered in a slow, distinct, deliberate, solemn voice, with considerable energy, and a raising of the tone at the words in italics. This may serve as a specimen of the Lord Chief Baron's style. It is full of the emphatic utterances of general principles, or broad moral sentiments, which he sometimes makes the basis of his legal views; whence it is that they were often uncommonly loose and unsatisfactory; and though sometimes the utterances of the old man had a breadth of view and elevation of idea which, united with great dignity and energy of expression, made them eloquent, they often broke away from the bounds of law, and have even afforded ample food for waggonery.

He was proud, as well he might be, of his age—or rather of his perfect possession of his mental powers, and his fitness for judicial duties, at such an age. "I am," he is fond of saying, "the oldest judge who has ever been known to sit on the English bench. I am eighty-two. Lord Mansfield never, I believe, sat after he was eighty." There are stronger instances on the Irish bench, we believe; but then the work of an Irish Chief is nothing to that of an English Chief; and no one ever dreamt that the Lord Chief Baron was not perfectly able to discharge his judicial duties with efficiency, as far as mental power went.

Being lately asked if he had yet attained the dignity of a great-grandfather, he answered, proudly, "Yes, indeed; I have five great-grandchildren." He added, "The total number of my descendants is sixty-five." What a patriarchal dignity and happiness the old judge had attained unto! He had, indeed, in the language of Scripture, lived to see his children's children, unto the third and fourth generation. At the last assizes at Kingston—the last at which he ever sat—one or two of his grandchildren, some fine young girls, the daughter of one of his sons, were sitting beside him on the Bench; and it was pleasant to see how benignly the old man looked upon them from time to time, and how their fair young cheeks flushed with happy pride as he smiled and said a few playful words to them; and how delighted, and with what affectionate veneration, his son—their father—looked upon them. Altogether, it was a fine family picture; and one could not fail to see that all that domestic happiness can bring a man in his old age had fallen to the lot of the Lord Chief Baron, and that he was loved and honoured by his children and his children's children.

It is a remarkable fact that, of the three "Chiefs,"

Sir Frederick Pollock was by many years the oldest, and that he was decidedly—on the whole—the youngest, in the elasticity of his energy and the buoyancy—we might say the boyishness—of his spirits. There was just ten years' difference in their respective ages:—Sir A. Cockburn, 62; Sir W. Erie, 72; and Sir F. Pollock, 62; and though, no doubt, Sir W. Erie was more robust, and could stand a longer and harder task of judicial labour at a time, than either of the others, yet in point of elasticity and buoyancy, and unwavering freshness of vigour and vivacity, the Lord Chief Baron surpassed the two other and far younger Chiefs, albeit he was full ten years older than one, and twenty years older than the other. At length, however, the decline of physical strength warned the fine old man that it would be wiser and better to retire while his mental powers remained unimpaired and fully able to enjoy the repose of retirement. Long may he live to enjoy it!

OLIVER DARVEL.

CHAPTER LIII.

THE Electress awoke from the long and heavy sleep into which the opiates had thrown her, but it was with a clouded intellect and shattered health. The mind which had so long vibrated on the verge of insanity had now decidedly passed the dividing line which lies between reason and fantasy.

The shock of her children's sudden death had broken both physical and mental health, and she sat for days in a large chair looking straight before her into empty space, nervously moving her fingers, but uttering not an intelligible sentence. Sometimes a low wail would escape her lips, succeeded by broken words, in which the names of Albert and Carl could be distinguished; but it was evident to those around her that the light of unclouded reason no longer illuminated her mind.

Her condition was reported to the Elector, but he remained unmoved in his determination to convene a secret council, which was to sit in judgment on the unfortunate woman, and consign her to the fate he insisted her treachery merited.

He was urged on to this by the secret influence that ruled him. The aspiring and haughty woman who had established such power over him wished the fate of her rival to be speedily settled, that she might step into her place as soon after her removal as propriety would permit.

A divorce had many months before the late catastrophe been secretly applied for at the court of Rome; but it might be long delayed or finally refused, and neither the Elector nor his inamorata was willing to await the uncertain issue. It was an easier and simpler course to take the life of the maddened woman, who had at last exposed herself to the vengeance of the laws by attempting to right the wrongs she had endured at the hands of her unprincipled husband.

The Elector dared not strike at the powerful churchman who had espoused the cause of his wife; but he insisted that a victim should be offered up, and where could so fitting a sacrifice be found as the woman who had been the life and soul of the conspiracy from which he had so narrowly escaped?

Father Joseph was still permitted free access to the unhappy princess, for he was known to be the intimate friend of more than one cardinal who possessed influence in the court of Rome; and Lady Imena used all her craft to prove to her lover that he would endanger everything they had most at heart by using severity towards the priest.

He listened to her representations, and was finally so far swayed by them as to grant Father Joseph the privilege he entreated—*to see and attempt to console the unfortunate woman he had so unsuccessfully attempted to serve.*

He proved to the Elector that the conspirators had never designed to take his life; and making a virtue of necessity, the prince patched up a treaty of peace between himself and the man whose power to thwart his views he so much deprecated.

But vain were all the good priest's efforts to speak peace to the broken-hearted creature who sat a pale and silent image of woe, apparently unconscious of the consoling words addressed to her. Her hair had grown as white as snow in those first hours of anguish, and the bright bloom which had once glowed upon her cheeks and lips had given place to a deadly pallor that no emotion seemed to have power to break.

At midnight the council was convened to sit in

judgment on the ruler's wife. The large apartment in which the young princes had lain in state before their burial was still draped with black, and in that the Elector was hard enough to summon his wife to answer for the crime with which she was charged.

Deserted by all her attendants save Katrina, who still clung to her, the Electress was with some difficulty made to understand that her toilet must be arranged at that strange hour of the night that she might make a fitting appearance before her judges. Robes of deepest sable trailed around her wasted form, and her long silver hair was combed out to its full length and left to ripple to her waist, a fitting frame for the wild, wan face it shaded.

A more touching picture of woe and desolation could not be imagined than that the princess presented as she entered the lighted room in which sat the men who had already predetermined her fate.

Only one among them was ready to interpose in her favour; but he felt he was a host within himself, and he was resolute to save her life, or bring ruin on him who so insatiably demanded its sacrifice. Only on the previous day had Father Joseph received dispatches from Rome which contained the gratifying intelligence that he had been elevated to the rank of a cardinal in the Church, and appointed by the Pope as his special envoy to the little court of Lichtenfels. His new dignity was at once revealed to the Elector, and he demanded as his right that he should be summoned among those who had been chosen to sit upon this secret tribunal. With extreme reluctance was his request granted; but, backed as the priest was by a powerful body of malcontent subjects, the Elector understood the dangers of his own position too well to refuse the request which had all the force of a command.

A table covered with a black cloth stood in the centre of the floor; and around it sat the Elector with the senators he had summoned, all wearing that cold and resolute expression which proves that any appeal to humanity will be vain.

A little apart from these was the priest, in his plain garment of black serge, with no outward token upon his person that he bore the rank of a prince in the Church. A large cushioned chair had been placed for the Electress in front of her judges, and, after a half-frightened glance around, she sank into it as if too weak longer to sustain herself.

Father Joseph cast a searching and compassionate glance upon her changed face, and he perceived that her eyes lighted up with a sudden gleam of intelligence. It seemed as if the long-dormant soul were awakening to a perception of the dangers that surrounded her, for she cast a startled and resentful glance upon the cold faces that confronted her.

The senator to whom had been delegated the task of accusing her arose from his seat, and in a grave, hard tone rehearsed all her titles as if to give weight to what was to follow:

"Gertrude, Countess of Guilderstein, Princess of Berchtols, and Electress of Lichtenfels, you are arraigned before this tribunal on the most heinous charge that can be brought against a woman, a wife, and a subject. You are accused of conspiring against the life and authority of your liege lord and your husband. Have you anything to say in your own defence?"

She listened to him vaguely, and after a pause muttered:

"What is this room hung with black for? Why am I brought here, and what do you want with me?"

It was the first time she had spoken connectedly since that fatal evening, and the Elector and Father Joseph both leaned forward to gain a better view of her face.

A faint light seemed breaking over its late immobility, and the strong tremor of suddenly aroused feeling was evidently shaking her frame to its centre.

The same unsympathetic voice replied to her questions:

"This room is hung with black because it is the colour of doom; and you have been brought hither to hear the sentence of death passed upon you, unless you can bring forward something to palliate the awful crimes for which you are arraigned before this tribunal."

The accused passed her hand over her brow, and held it pressed there a moment as if trying to steady the brain beneath. A flash of sudden light revealed to her the precipice on which she stood, and a smile of bitter scorn wreathed her lip as she extended her arm and pointed her finger towards her husband. In clear, ringing tones she cried out:

"Ask him why I was goaded to the course I took."

Let him recall all the years of wrong and bitterness, in which such scores have accumulated against him as no vengeance can repay. Yes—I conspired against him—I confess it; I would have torn from him the power to insult and trample on me; to elevate another to the position that of right was mine. I hate him—and with good cause, but I would not have killed him, though he is now trying to take my life. I understand at this moment what all this mockery means, but I shall not be able to grasp it long. My brain already begins to whirl and seethe; but I comprehend that the bad woman who has lured my husband from me has compassed the destruction of my children, and now demands my life as the last consummation of her wickedness. But woe, woe to her, and all who are led by her to commit this last offence against a woman who has no defender. Woe to you, Elector of Lichtenfels, if you stain your hands with my blood, that you may the sooner grasp that of my rival as your bride! I see—I see! Oh, heaven! There! the phantom comes again—it clutches my brain—tears from me all power of thought, and whirls me into space, a fiery atom dragging after it a train of flame. Destroy me, Prince Ernest, and I will descend as a comet upon your devoted city, and offer you and yours as a holocaust on the tomb of my murdered children."

Exhausted by the vehemence of her words, she again sank to her seat, the light faded from her eyes, a leaden pallor overspread her whole face, and the nervous trembling of her frame showed that she had relapsed into her old condition.

The judges shook their heads, and one of them said:

"She is certainly insane, but that does not matter. Such method as is in her madness evidently points towards injury to her husband, and it is our duty to put it so entirely out of her power ever to conspire against him again as only one thing can effect. Gentlemen, the formality of a trial was due to the rank of the criminal, but we all knew before assembling here that she merited death, and I flatter myself that the sentence will be pronounced without a dissenting voice. Let us put it to the vote."

"Agreed," was heard from all save one.

Father Joseph arose and calmly said:

"Gentlemen, my calling forbids me to sit here and see a life voted away that should be sacred in the eyes of men. Lay not your hands upon the Lord's anointed with intent to destroy, has been commanded, and I repeat it here with all the solemn emphasis due to the words of inspiration. The Electress of Lichtenfels can only be tried by her peers, and this council possesses no right to sit in judgment upon her. She is a crushed and broken-hearted woman, with no power to injure anyone, and I demand that the blighted life, which is all that is left to her, shall be spared. I have my instructions from the Pope himself, who has deigned to interest himself in this sad case, to that effect, and I only speak as I have been commanded."

He sat down, as calm and apparently as impassive as the pale creature who listened to his words as if she possessed no interest in them. The brief flash of intelligence had passed, and she sat, moving her hands restlessly, but showing no other sign of emotion.

The Elector started from his seat, and with a deep oath furiously tried:

"The Pope! Who dared appeal to him to meddle in a case that should only fall under my jurisdiction? I am lord paramount in my little realm; the power of life and death rests in my own hands, and if ever criminal merited doom at the hands of her judges the woman sitting before us does. If she be permitted to live she will work me woe enough, I doubt not; yet you—you, with your skirts scarcely cleared of complicity in the crime with which she stands charged—you dare to stand up in her defence! Oh! this insolence passes all endurance!"

The priest arose, and gathering his robe around him, made a step forward and coldly said:

"My Lord of Lichtenfels, I avow my share in the plot which had for its object the removal of a bad man from the high position he has proved himself unworthy to fill. I am well aware that if I had been less powerfully protected I should have shared the fate you seem so anxious to award to your helpless wife. But, fortunately for myself, I am at the head of too powerful an organization to be dealt with after that summary fashion. If a priest, so well known and so popular as I am, received injury at your hands you know that your power would crumble beneath the persistent blows that would be dealt at it by the numerous brethren I claim in your petty state. In

addition to this, the protection of Rome is thrown around me, and you dare not put an indignity upon a prince of the Church. If you did such a thing your own subjects would rise up and avenge it. If you refuse my prayer in behalf of this unfortunate lady I will appeal to them to protect her against your ruthless hatred. I will show them that she has been so deeply wronged that even the extreme measures she took to justify herself were so right that I lent myself to their accomplishment. I will proclaim this openly, and you will be overwhelmed by the result. My lord, I do not wish to threaten your highness, but when the life of a crushed and demented lady is at stake I must risk everything to protect her from those who have come hither to participate in the mockery of a trial, when the sentence has already been determined upon."

"Insolent upstart!" "Wretch!" and other opprobrious exclamations issued from the lips of the councillors, but the Elector only bit his nether lip, and looked irresolute. In a tone of chagrin he presently said:

"This, then, is why you so persistently demanded to be present here to-night. Why should the Pope interest himself in the fate of a woman who is unknown to him—of one who has been guilty of such crimes as richly merit condemnation? Your eminence has, I am afraid, given an unfair picture of my character to the head of the Christian world, or he would never have interfered to protect my wife from the just vengeance she has brought upon herself. If I am denied the privilege of dealing with her according to her deserts; if the life of the Electress is protected, it is not just that she should be permitted to remain as a clog upon my future path. She has caused me suffering enough already without that."

The lip of the ascetic slightly curled as he replied:

"I have a fair equivalent to offer in exchange for what I ask. As soon as her highness is removed to some safe asylum, where the remnant of her life can be passed in security and peace, I shall have the power granted to me from Rome to loosen the bonds that bind you to her, and you will be free to bestow your hand upon another. Look at her as she sits before you, and take to your heart the assurance that she can no farther injure you. Surely, my lord, you would not bring upon yourself the reproach of immolating a stricken creature on whom the hand of affliction has already been so heavily laid."

The Elector glanced disdainfully towards his wife, and then said:

"If I may choose her place of imprisonment I will consent to your extraordinary demand—not otherwise."

"And where would your highness place her?"

"I will send her back to my own castle of Berchtols, where she has spent many happy years, as she must have admitted to you herself. Only under the guardianship of my uncle, the Baron of Ardeheim, shall I feel that she is safely kept. If I give her life I give it, and I pledge to you my honour that it shall not be tampered with in any manner. If the Electress has brought accusations against my kinsman remember that all she could allege was that he had constantly kept her under the influence of a sedative which her subsequent conduct proved that she greatly needed. His skill may again produce the tranquillity of mind which she is evidently far from enjoying at present."

The priest hesitated a few moments, and then said:

"I accept the Castle of Berchtols as the best asylum that can be provided for her highness, but I reserve to myself the right to visit her twice each year as long as she lives, that I may judge of the condition of her mind and body, and I furthermore shall claim the right of a *post mortem* examination in case of her death."

The lip of the Elector curled disdainfully.

"I understand what that precaution means, but you are welcome to take it. Obtain for me the divorce I ask, let me shut up this insane nonentity in my solitary castle under a strict guardian, and she may live to be a hundred years old for all I care."

"It is enough, my lord. I only use the power delegated to me by one I am bound to obey, and I fearlessly consent to leave this unfortunate lady under the protection of your uncle. He will fully understand that if life or reason be tampered with, the powerful protection which has been extended to her will mete out to him such punishment as he would shrink from incurring. Pardon my boldness, your highness, but I have been set forward to speak in the

interests of humanity, and I dare not disobey the commands laid upon me. I am but the mouthpiece. I ask mercy and forbearance towards one so stricken down as this hapless lady now is. My lords, it remains with you to reverse the intention with which you came hither."

With a low, deferential bow, which seemed almost a mockery after thus dictating to them the course they should pursue, Father Joseph stepped back and resumed his seat.

The incensed and bewildered judges looked questioningly at their master, unwilling to pronounce an acquittal without his express commands; to that effect. Perceiving this, the Elector scornfully said:

"Since the Pope has taken it on himself to throw theegis of his protection around this guilty woman, I have no choice but to vail my prerogative before his authority. Pronounce her sentence in accordance with the commands of the newly made cardinal."

The bitter sarcasm of his tones did not conceal the rage and disappointment that breathed through them. He waved his hand impatiently towards the senator who had first addressed the Electress, and in obedience that personage arose, and again calling her by the empty titles which were now but a bitter mockery to her fallen state, spoke thus:

"Gertrude, Countess of Guilderstein, Princess of Berchtols, and Electress of Lichtenfels, in accordance with the instructions given me I arise to pronounce on you the sentence which the clemency and humanity of your injured husband has awarded you. Your forfeited life will be spared, and you will be removed as early as practicable to the Castle of Berchtols, there to remain as a prisoner of state under the care of the most noble Baron of Ardeheim, who will see that every reasonable want is attended to and every precaution taken to prevent your escape."

Again a fleeting intelligence seemed to dawn on the prisoner, and she hastened to reply to such portions of this address as she had understood:

"Yes, send me back to Berchtols. I shall be best there. My children were born there, and—and—heaven knows how it was, but I was happy there once; yes, happy—happy. Let the baron drug me again, if it will bring back the peace that has fled; if it will allay the pain that gnaws here without ceasing," and she laid her hand on her heart in an attitude of pathetic helplessness which might have moved the most stony-hearted of her judges. But it had not this effect upon those, who were only enraged that they were compelled to spare her at the command of a comparative stranger.

The Elector now addressed his wife in hard, abrupt tones, which betrayed neither sympathy nor relenting:

"You can now retire to your own apartment, Lady Gertrude, and you will remain there till the arrangements for your final removal are complete."

She feebly arose, passing her hand over her eyes, and turned to the speaker. And with something of her old fire she said:

"Adieu, most princely, most noble, most considerate of husbands. I bequeath to you undying remorse and dire retribution for the evil you have wrought me. This is your hour of triumph; but the God who pities, and in His own good time avenges the wrongs of the weak and oppressed, will yet find you and deal blow for blow in return for all the cowardly ones you have struck at me. Oh! the fiery pain—the fiery pain! It clutches my brain again!"

She fell back as suddenly as if struck by an unseen hand. Father Joseph was the only one who offered to approach and assist her. After speaking a few words to her, in a soothing and compassionate tone, she became calm enough to arise; and making a cold bow to those who had so unwillingly been forced to spare her life, the Electress tottered from the hall of judgment, followed by her only friend.

CHAPTER LIV.

On the third day after the mockery of a trial which the Electress had undergone, she set out, attended by an armed escort, for the Castle of Berchtols.

Father Joseph accompanied her to the place of her exile, for he not only wished to afford her the consolation of his presence, but to hold an interview with the baron, in which, he doubted not, he could effectually deter him from practising against the life of the unfortunate woman confided to his care. He was fully aware that her mind had never been entirely cloudless since her arrival in Lichtenfels, for he had once remarked the great change which had taken place in her since her joyous departure from

Vienna as a bride; but how far the aberration had gone before this last blow nearly destroyed both mental and vital power, he found it difficult to determine.

Until it came and crushed her the priest indulged the hope that her mind would react when she was once delivered from the grinding tyranny that held her in servile subjection to her unprincipled husband, and he had entered into the conspiracy in the hope that through his means the Electress might be restored to such happiness as could be found in the ambitious cares of State.

He sedulously concealed from her his own convictions that the tragic death of her children had not been accidental, though no doubt was left in his mind after the flight of Jacobi that he had been the instrument of fate to them; and he had learned enough of his antecedents to know who was the ruthless temptress to this dastardly act.

Yet he dared not accuse her, for he was well aware that the powerful Italian connexions of Lady Ilmena would protect her interest at the court of Rome, and render any effort on his part to expose her turpitude only the means of causing himself to be removed from Lichtenfels.

The last he now deprecated, for his strongest desire was to watch over the safety of the unhappy being who, without him to protect her, must be left helpless and hopeless in the unscrupulous hands of her worst enemies.

The Electress bore the journey better than he expected, and, as they drew near Berchtols, she seemed to shake off a portion of the heavy weight of despondency that rested upon her spirits. The dimmed eyes lightened with recognition as familiar points in the scenery passed before them, and more than once she addressed her companion in a lucid and connected manner.

When the carriage entered the narrow gorge leading into the valley she leaned from the window and pointed eagerly to the spot on which she had sprung from the sledge on the night of her first arrival at Berchtols. She rapidly said:

"Look! it was there—there that I fell on that fatal night which gave me over to him, his helpless victim. The snow received me, or I should have killed myself against the rocks. If I threw myself out with such force now I should end my miseries at once. But I will not—I will not. I will wait for my turn; it will come—it must come; and I will live for it—yes, live for it, though life is so sad a burden to me now."

The priest regarded her with deep compassion. The little light that gleamed at intervals upon her dazed mind seemed ever to point to vengeance on her husband, and he soothingly said:

"My dear daughter, your time for peace, for rest from strife, is approaching. In this secluded spot you will be free from the turmoil of existence, and I trust that a portion of the happiness you told me you once enjoyed here will return to you again. Heaven is very good to all its children, and it will yet send its blessing to you."

"Yes," she vaguely replied, "God is good; I never doubted that; but the men He has made are not like Him, I am afraid. Yes—I hope the baron can give me back the foolish dream in which I lived so long. Only let him remove this rending pain from my heart, and I will bless his skill. Oh, anything—anything! to forget, to be at rest once more!"

The pathetic passion in her tones was even more touching than her words; but deep as was his sympathy Father Joseph could find nothing to say in reply.

By this time the carriage had gained the lower entrance, and began to wind slowly up the face of the rock on which the castle stood.

Baron Ardeheim was in the court-yard ready to welcome them, and his reception of the Electress raised him higher than before in the estimation of her observant companion. He took her hand in his own, and seemingly forgetful of the crime she had attempted, he expressed the tenderest sympathy for her in words so well chosen that they might almost have deceived the unhappy woman herself had her judgment been at its best.

As it was, she passively received his consolations, and permitted herself to be led into her old apartments, followed by Katrina, for she and her husband had chosen to accompany their mistress in her exile; and Father Joseph had stipulated that they were to be the attendants of the imprisoned lady.

An hour later the two gentlemen sat down to a luxurious supper; and after it was dispatched and the servants dismissed they calmly discussed the affairs of the unhappy Electress.

The priest saw little reason to distrust his companion's expressions of sympathetic regard for the object of his care; but he sought to impress on the baron's mind the necessity of treating the princess with the tenderness and consideration due to the terrible bereavement she had lately borne. To this Baron Ardeheim at once replied:

"Your eminence has doubtless been led by my unfortunate niece to believe that I have conspired with her husband against her peace and happiness; but that is an hallucination that a clear-headed man like yourself will scarcely share with her. Soon after her arrival here the Electress had a severe attack of illness, from which my skill rescued her. I noticed at that time symptoms of the aberration of mind which has since become so painfully marked. But for the sedative I prepared for her she would long ago have become as incurably insane as I believe she now is. I am aware that she has confided to you all her imaginary cause of complaint against both her husband and myself; but I can trust to your candour to exonerate us from such baseness as it would have been to steal her intellect through the unscrupulous use of drugs. Gertrude was once a woman of most violent temper and rash impulse; it was necessary to control her, and all I did was with a view of saving her from consummating her own ruin, as she has done since she passed from under my care. Had I still remained her medical attendant this last calamity would never have happened to her."

Father Joseph sighed. Even his penetration was at fault before this accomplished dissimulator. He presently said:

"The best proof that I can give you of my belief in your truth, baron, is that I am willing to restore this unhappy lady to your protection. When Berchtols was named as her place of exile she seemed pleased at the idea of returning hither, and she even expressed the wish that your medical skill may again be used for her benefit. Restore serenity to her overwrought mind, and you will prove yourself her true benefactor. I have no hope that she will ever recover the original brightness of her mind, and under the painful circumstances of her lot the shattered condition of her intellect may be considered almost as a blessing. I have already related to you what passed between the Elector and myself with reference to his wife, and you are aware that she has been fortunate enough to obtain protection from his holiness the Pope."

The baron bowed, and he impressively went on:

"I have further to say to you that the members of the secret brotherhood are interested in the fate of this unhappy lady, and you, as one of them, are bound to do for her as you would for your own mother or sister."

At this allusion the baron's face assumed a sickly yellow tint, and he seemed gasping for breath. His dilating eyes were fixed on the calm speaker, who lifted his hand, and half unclosing it, showed a small gold symbol, on which some mystic characters were engraved.

The baron arose from his seat and bent with deepest reverence before it, then in a husky tone he said:

"I bow before the sacred authority of the mystic brotherhood. I acknowledge the bearer of that symbol as my master, and I pledge myself to obey his behests in every particular."

The priest faintly smiled, and again concealing the jewel which had produced so marked an effect, spoke with some sternness in his tones:

"It is well. To the dread inspired by this powerful organization I owe my success with the Elector and his council, more even than to the great hierarchy I represent at the court of Lichtenfels. Before they met to pronounce the doom of the Electress I caused each one to be warned of the high position among our brethren which has been bestowed on me, and through their fears for their own safety I won the life I asked; through yours, Baron Ardeheim, I intend now to protect it. I leave the Princess Gertrude here as confident of your kind treatment to her as if you were her brother. Am I not right, sir?"

With another deep reverence the baron replied:

"You are the master, I am bound to obey your slightest command. Henceforth my unfortunate niece is sacred to me, and I pledge myself to do all that is possible to render her comfortable and contented here."

To this Father Joseph coldly replied:

"I knew that such must be your course, or I should not have consented to place her under your protection. I believe we now fully understand each other."

The baron bowed in assent, and the priest arose, and paced the floor, apparently absorbed in deep thought. His companion did not venture to interrupt him, till he again spoke himself.

"My journey has fatigued me, baron, and I shall gladly retire. At an early hour of the morning I must set out on my return to Lichtenfels, and therefore I wish to seek repose as soon as may be convenient."

"Pardon me, Father, that I had not thought of that before; but I indulged the hope that you would remain at Berchtols as my guest for a few days. I do not often find such congenial companionship as yours, and I flattered myself that you would be induced to sojourn with me for a season."

"I would gladly do so if affairs of importance did not demand my presence at Lichtenfels; but it is imperative that I return thither with unnecessary delay. My mind is at rest concerning the hapless lady I have given into your charge, and I must return to protect other interests not less important than hers."

"I submit to your decision in this, as I am bound to do in all things," was the respectful reply, and a servant was summoned to carry lights before them to the room which had been prepared for the guest.

The baron entered the apartment with him, glanced almost nervously around to see that everything was in order; then with a faint sigh of relief he bade his companion good-night, and hastened to his own sanctum to review all that had passed between them, and make up his mind to the humiliating position in which he found himself placed.

The powerful secret organization of which the priest had proclaimed himself the head was at that day so widely spread through Germany, its laws were so stringent, and its power so great, that its members trembled before its mandates, knowing that there was no escape from the punishment decreed to a single violation of them.

The baron had joined it in his youth, and, once enrolled as a member, there was no escape from the obligations thus incurred. He had not meant to be long troubled with the half-demented Electress, but now he was bound to protect her from injury, and treat her with kindness, or this man with the fearful power delegated to him would bring such retribution upon him as he trembled to think of.

He, who was so ruthless towards others, had a very tender regard for his own safety, so that that hour the poor dazed lady was safe under the same roof with himself.

The baron passed into a small laboratory communicating with his chamber, and after securing the door carefully behind him took from an inlaid cabinet a tiny crystal phial filled with an almost impalpable powder. With a regretful survey of this fatal preparation he muttered:

"I dare not use it now. All my skill will be thrown away—my subtle power set at naught at the command of this man is too, too humiliating—yet I dare not disobey his lightest behest. In place of this potent life destroyer I can only use an innocent sedative which will medicine her mind to rest, and perhaps bring it gradually back to a sound condition. Ah! that woman will work me evil yet if I be not ever on my guard! Yet my hands are tied, and I can do nothing against her. I regret now that I was ever tempted to enter the mystic brotherhood; they have done me no good, and may chance to do me much evil by meddling in what does not concern them."

Handling the phial as tenderly as if it could feel his touch, the baron turned it in every direction, and then with a deep sigh consigned it to a secret receptacle in the cabinet, and turned away.

He was an enthusiast in the science to which he had devoted himself, and he contended that chemistry was the great power through which the world was yet to be ruled. His own discoveries had not been unimportant, though he kept them carefully concealed, for they consisted chiefly in mastering the subtle power of the most deadly agents that can be brought to bear upon the human frame.

With an expression of sullen disgust he took up a phial of drops, and surveying them contemptuously, again spoke in a discontented, muttering tone:

"I will try the effect of these, but I must be ever on the watch to mark each change for the better, that I may guard myself against her. The danger near me may be even greater than that to be dreaded from an outside power however formidable—the most imminent I must protect myself from first—the other can be baffled afterwards."

He took off his boots, and putting on a pair of felt slippers left the laboratory, and stealthily approached the room of the Electress.

The night was warm, and Katrina had opened the outer door leading into her lady's bed-chamber to obtain a freer circulation of air. The baron paused at the entrance, saw that she was sleeping calmly, and he softly advanced to her bed-side to examine her condition more critically.

The worn and pallid face, so changed from the flashing brightness which had once distinguished it, did not appeal to a single compassionate instinct in his nature. The sole wish of his heart was that he could only dare to assist this premature decay till a speedy and safe release by death would be secured to her.

He consoled himself as he best could with the thought that nature might accomplish for him what he was debarred from attempting.

Katrina came from the inner chamber, and seemed surprised and rather startled to find the baron there. She asked, in a tremulous voice:

"Have you come here to renew your old practices, Herr Baron? I must tell you that I have had my orders about my lady, and I can no longer lend myself to your services. If I had believed that you meant to injure her I would never have done so before; but I really thought it best to make her happy in the only way left me by obeying your commands."

"Ah, bah! You needn't explain to me. You and Hugel make your own account out of your compliance with the will of my nephew, for it was not my command you obeyed but his. I have also had my orders if you must know it, and they are stringent enough to prevent me from attempting to injure a hair of this helpless creature's head. Give me credit for wishing to serve her, Katrina, and observe for yourself the effect of these drops. They will act both as a sedative and restorative as you will see. They have been prepared at the command of Father Joseph himself, as he will tell you to-morrow. Give them to your lady when she is restless and inclined to be sad, they will quiet her nerves and cause her to sleep well."

While he thus spoke the woman regarded him keenly. She took the phial, examined its contents, and with a sigh said:

"I have no choice but to obey you, sir; but I could wish that nature was left to do something for my poor mistress. I am sure she would be better without these drops."

"Better! pooh! That is an absurd notion of yours. Is she not crushed down by grief, broken-hearted by the loss of her sons to that degree that, if something be not done for her her poor mind will never recover from the shock? At this crisis I prove myself really the best friend she has; for I intend to make her revive sufficiently to become a companion for me in the solitude of this secluded place. Don't mistrust me, Katrina, for to-morrow his eminence will tell you that, aside from you and himself, I am the best friend your lady has."

The woman bowed without farther reply, and the baron left the room.

On the following morning a brief interview between the father and herself confirmed the truth of the baron's words, and Katrina was glad to learn from him that her mistress had nothing to fear from the nefarious skill she had learned to dread so deeply.

Wishing to escape a parting interview with the Electress, Father Joseph was pleased to learn that a heavy sleep still sealed her eyes, and after exchanging a few impressive words with her maid he took leave of Baron Ardeheim, and set out for Lichtentels, accompanied by the escort which had brought the discarded wife to Bercholz.

Immediately after his return the Elector demanded the price of his wife's safety, and the divorce was formally granted. Preparations were immediately commenced for a magnificent bridal, and a week from the day on which his freedom from matrimonial ties was assured the Elector of Lichtentels again assumed them, and the Lady of Hildenstein was elevated to the position she had so long and ardently coveted—which she had stained her soul with crime to attain.

In the hour of her triumph she thought not of that. The gratification of both pride and affection stifled the uneasy fear that retribution might yet find her, and the sacrifices of those innocent children be avenged.

She assumed her position not only as the wife of an adoring husband, but as the joint ruler of their little realm, for she was much more ambitious a woman to remain contented in the privacy of domestic life. Hers was the ruling spirit, and Prince Ernest soon found that she would not be contented with reigning

over his people, unless she claimed an equal sway over himself.

He submitted to this with a better grace than might have been expected, for she had established over him an influence that he sometimes marvelled at himself; yet from which he made no effort to emancipate himself. Perhaps he felt that it would be useless, for this woman was more than a match for him in cunning and want of principle.

But Lady Ilmena had the tact to render her husband contented in his bondage; she soothed his vanity by always placing him in the foreground, even while she moved the wires that governed his little State.

His happiness and exultation were unbounded when an heir to his honours was born, and revelry reigned in the little court, while the proud mother congratulated herself that no rival to her son's claims on his father's inheritance was in existence. A grand christening took place, and amid their joy no presentiment foreshadowed the terrible catastrophe which impended over them.

(To be continued.)

FACETIÆ.

THE newest idea which has occurred to hatters is to call their business headology, and, of course, Who's your hatter? must now be, Who's your headologist?

A STRIKE OF SMOCK-FROCKS.

(Mr. Hancock sings.)

'Tis strikin for wages as now's all the rage
In this here progressive enlightenment age;
All labour's a risin, and prices is too;
And I don't know what we be gonn to do.

The weavers was always a strikin, and then
The miners they struck, and the ironworks men;
The builders is often on strike for a rise;
And even the tailors strikes sometimes, likewise.

Of strikes on the railways intended you hear,
The cry is Strike Stokers, and Strike Engineers;
Which must, sitch small profits the Companies
Shares.

Make them strike as well by an increase of fares;
The shipwrights have struck for additional pay;
Can't live on six shillins and sixpence a day;
Whiles here there is fellows, that bain't fur to seek,

Contrives for to do on nine shillins a week;
When I, as a youth, did a clothuppus roam
I oft heard the bumpkins sing "British Strike
Home."

But there was no strikin in them days as now;
They only struck hoeses that feller'd the plough.
Now they've took at last too to strikin, I hear,
The lab'rs at Gawcott in Buckinghamshire.

Ten shillins a week's all they arned hithertofore,
But now they have struck to get two shillin more.

Trades' Unions for workmen arranges a strike.
Farm lab'rs have now begun down the like.
They've got their Committee and Treasurer too,
Likewise Secretary to carry 'em droo.

That system of strikin, by all I can find,
Will soon be tried here if we farmers don't mind;
And if the men strikes that's employed on the land,
I s'pose their employers must grant their demand.

Consider'n to how much provisions do come,
Ten shillins a week, I must own, 's a small sum;
And if there's a strike as is anyways fair
'Tis sitch as the strike up nigh Buckingham there.

But if we complies, for to gie 'um content,
We also must strike for reduction of rent,
But can't strike and pay at the same time, wuss lack;
While others can strike, we can only be struck.

Of all this here strikin the end I don't see,
Nor who, arter all, is the sufferers to be.
But this I'll acknowledge, there's nobody can
Have more cause to strike nor a farm lab'r man.

Punch.

EQUITABLE.—Harry Turn recently married his cousin of the same name. When interrogated as to why he did so he replied that it had always been a maxim of his that "one good Turn deserves another."

AN old-fashioned, wealthy fellow, who was never known to have anything in the line of new apparel but once, and that when he was going on a journey had to purchase a new pair of boots. The coach left before daybreak, and so he got ready, and went to the hotel to stop for the night. Among a whole row of boots in the morning he could not find the old familiar pair—he had forgotten the new ones. He hunted and hunted in vain. The coach was ready, and so he looked carefully round to see that he was

not observed, put on a nice pair that fitted him, called the waiter and told him the circumstances, giving him ten shillings for the owner of the boots when he called for them. The owner never called. The old man had bought his own boots!

IN the next "Reformed" Parliament, if Reform be settled as certain gentlemen desire, aspirants may take the following hint for an election address; it was delivered in West Virginia:—"Vote for General Karns, who was ten years old before he wore either pants or shoes."

PROVING IT.—A drunken French soldier, quarrelling with his corporal, ended by saying, "Hold your tongue, you are not a man." "I will prove the contrary," replied the corporal, getting angry. "Never," replied the soldier; "you cannot. What does the major say when he orders out the guard on parade? Doesn't he always say, 'Four men and a corporal'? That shows a corporal is not a man."

WE knew a fellow who, upon learning that a friend of his had gone into the publishing business, at once subscribed for the paper. The publisher was rather delicate about sending the bill—but after some ten years had elapsed made bold to dun his "constant reader," when the latter at once grew indignant, refused to pay, and ordered the paper to be stopped, alleging that he "had taken the paper for so many years just to keep it along, and now to be asked to pay for it was too mean."

A raw days since a young lawyer was examining a bankrupt as to how he had spent his money. There were about three thousand pounds unaccounted for, when the attorney put on a severe scrutinising face, and exclaimed, with much self-complacency, "Now, sir, I want you to tell this court and jury how you used those three thousand pounds." The bankrupt put on a serio-comic face, winked at the audience, and exclaimed—"The lawyers got that!" The judge and audience were convulsed with laughter, and the counsellor was glad to let the bankrupt go.

AN ELEGANT SPEECH.—At the meeting of the Trades' Delegates, held in London the other day, Mr. Leicester, glass-blower, referring to the speeches of the mover and seconder of the address in the House of Lords on the subject of Trades' Unions, said they showed they knew as much about the subject as a pig did about catching lobsters. (A laugh.) They were a specimen of the buffoonery, ignorance, and insolence which prevailed. The great reason why they should have a small committee sitting with the commission was this, that with these noodles it was a foregone conclusion that the Unions were acting criminally.

A CAUTION TO YOUNG MEN.—To a lady endeavouring to figure, and not good-looking in face, you should be careful of saying anything which she might consider "plump and plain."—Punch.

LOOK BEFORE YOU LEAP.

Middle-aged Uncle: "Not proposed to her yet? Why, what a shilly-shallying fellow you are, George! You'll have that little widow snatched up from under your nose, as sure as you're born!" Pretty gal, like that—nice little property—evidently likes you—with an estate in the Highlands, too, and you a sporting man!"

Nephew: "Ah! that's where it is, uncle! Home fishing's good, I know; but I'm not so sure about home grounds!"—Punch.

LOYAL AND GRATIFYING.—On hearing that several flying columns were ordered for service in Ireland, the Nelson's statue and the Duke of York's instantly sent in to know if their columns could be of any use. Both requested an answer through the medium of Mr. Punch's flying columns.—Punch.

HAD EXCUSE BETTER THAN NONE.

Uncle: "Have you read that article in the *Lancet* about chignons, Joe?"

Nephew (invalid captain from India): "Haw! extracts—yes, gowdiness!—frightful idea! (Happy thought.) Why, it ain't safe to go to church positively with ladies!"—Punch.

CONTRADICTION.—It may seem strange, but it is a fact well known to those who have but a slight and superficial acquaintance with science, that if you keep a fire thoroughly cooled you will probably keep yourself thoroughly warm.—Pun.

SHOCKING RAILWAY ACCIDENT.—The other evening as Dr. — of —, in Kent, was travelling by the London, Chatham, and Dover line, and shortly before the train entered the tunnel which runs under the grounds of the Crystal Palace, his attention was attracted by cries of "Someone ill—someone ill!" With an alacrity which speaks volumes for his humanity and professional soul, he leapt from the carriage, and declaring himself to be a medical man, offered to attend to the sick person. On

inquiry, however, he learnt that it was only one of the porters crying out the name of the station, which he pronounced "Byah'n 'ill!" Unfortunately, by the time the doctor discovered this, the train had started, and owing to this shocking accident he arrived home too late for dinner.—*Fun.*

HORTICULTURAL HINTS.—While the present inclement weather lasts all our-door operations must, of course, be suspended, but you can cultivate your manners in-doors. You can't do anything to your fruit-trees, but by taking a season-ticket on the nearest line you can indulge in any amount of training. German stocks can't be planted till it warms, but London, Chatham, and Dover stock may be looked after. It ought to be coming up now, for it has gone down long enough. It doesn't thrive in Pest—oh!—*Fun.*

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

M. GAILLARD suggests the making of a safety lucifer-match by dipping the stick into melted sulphur after the application of the sulphur. The sulphur protects the match from damp, and only requires greater friction to ignite.

CHARCOAL made from the shell of the cocco-nut has been found to exert the power of absorbing gases to a much greater extent than that of any other known wood. It is very dense and brittle, the pores are quite invisible, and when broken the edges present a semi-metallic lustre.

EXPERIMENTS made on men and animals go to show that the temperature of the body falls nearly as fast after the use of alcohol in doses sufficient to produce intoxication as after death itself.

Mrs. COLE, Secretary to the Exhibition Committee, is said to have lost much of his innate serenity of temper in his daily squabbles with the French Executive. His admiration for the great building, with the fitting up of which he has been intrusted so far as England is concerned, has considerably diminished, and he now considers it the ugliest and largest undertaking that ever was imagined.

ELECTRICITY IN MEDICINE.—The use of electricity by the physician and the surgeon has long been recognised, but it is still only in its infancy, and no one is prepared to say how important the part may be which it will one day take in the department of medicine. An important step has been gained by M. Pulvermacher with his "Volta-electric Impresible Chain Batteries," which are very simple in construction and action, and by which a continuous current, which is all important in many operations, is maintained. The batteries, when exhausted, are easily restored. The use of magnetism has vastly increased the usefulness of these. They are of many prices, and within the reach of all. The inventor has an establishment in Regent Street, London, where the batteries may be inspected.

HOLYROOD HOUSE.—It was "once on a time" well known in Scotland, that the ancient palace of the kings and queens gave a title of nobility. John Bothwell, who lived at the beginning of the sixteenth century, was, in 1567, created "Lord Holyroodhouse," to him, and his heirs male, whom failing, to heirs male of his father's body, who was "Adam, Bishop of Orkney." So that the Kingdom of Scotland, the Capital of Scotland, and the Royal Palace of Scotland have all given titles of honour—the Duke of Albany, the Duke of Edinburgh, and Lord Holyroodhouse—and yet the people are so ignorant of this recognition of their kingdom, their city, and their palace, that there is not a single citizen, it is believed, who if the question were put to him as a test of patriotic knowledge, could tell that such a title as "Lord Holyroodhouse" ever stood on the list of Scottish peers. The peerage has long been extinct.

THE PRESIDENT HOUSE OF COMMONS.—We learn from Debet's recently published "House of Commons," edited by Mr. Robert H. May, that 169 members were educated at Eton, 81 at Harrow, 82 at Rugby, 29 at Westminster, 18 at Winchester, 11 at the Charterhouse, 2 at Merchant Taylors, 1 at St. Paul's, 19 at military or naval schools, 7 at King's College, London, 4 at University College, London, and 42 by private tutors, the remainder being alumni of grammar or private schools. One hundred and sixty-nine graduated at the University of Oxford, 124 at Cambridge, 28 at Dublin, 15 at Edinburgh, 4 at Glasgow, 1 at St. Andrews, and 7 at the London University. The legal profession is represented by 123 members, 95 of whom have been called to the English Bar, 18 to the Bar in Ireland, and 6 to the Scottish Bar, while 9 are, or have been, in practice as attorneys. Five are serjeants-at-law, and 50 are Queen's Counsel. Forty-seven were students at the Inner Temple, 36 at Lin-

coln's Inn, 9 at the Middle Temple, and 3 at Gray's Inn. Commissions in the army are, or have been, held by 112 members, in the navy by 13, in the yeomanry by 65, in the volunteers by 61, and in the militia by 60. Fifty members are Privy Councillors, 5 are Irish Peers, 70 are baronets, 10 are knights, 16 are Lord-Lieutenants of counties; 38 are heirs-apparent to peers, and 9 to baronets; 65 are younger sons of peers, and 15 of baronets; 11 are heirs-presumptive to peerages, and 2 to baronetcies. Ninety-seven have held, or are holding, official Government appointments, 8 are sons of members, 81 are authors or editors, 128 are directors of public companies, 169 are bankers, manufacturers, merchants, or in business, 9 are, or have been, medical practitioners, 98 have served the office of high sheriff, 487 are justices of the peace, 363 are deputy-lieutenants; 117 have changed their constituencies, and 40 have changed, or added to, their patronymics. The eldest member is Sir William Verner, born 1782, and the youngest Lord Newport, born 1845. Fifty-three members were born in the last century, and 25 have been born since, and including the year 1840. In the years 1805 and 1815 21 members in each year were born, and in 1816 and 1825 23 were born in each year. The next most prolific years were 1809, 1810, and 1817, when 19 members in each year were born, and 1811, 1812 and 1826, when 18 were born in each year.

AFTER THE PLAY.

Put out the lights, the play is done,
And let the actors disappear;
Some brief applause they may have won,
Some echo caught that yet shall cheer
The darkness, as their footsteps tend
To separate homes by separate ways;
But oh! what transient beams they lend
To brighten down the dying days.

Put out the lights and let's away—
The fleeting pleasure of the night,
Born of the glitter of the play,
Will scarcely show against the light;
The painted pictures on the wall,
The painted faces on the stage,
Leave nothing that we need recall
To beautify a later age.

Put out the lights, and in the dark
And in the silence let us go;
The play is over—save the mark—
The travesties of joy and woe.
God help us that we look on these,
When all around are human lives,
Whose founts are constant tragedies,
Where little love or hope survives.

W. S. P.

GEMS.

FRIENDSHIP once injured is for ever lost.
VOWS made in storms are forgotten in calms.
Most persons know what they hate, few what they love.

Who keeps company with a wolf will learn to howl.

No one to whom it is misery to be alone has a well-regulated mind and heart.

A man loves whom his judgment approves; a woman's judgment approves when she loves.

If you have an opportunity to do a generous action, do it. It's a very pleasant reflection to go to sleep with.

We should not forget that life is but a flower, which is no sooner fully blown than it begins to wither.

He who labours with the mind governs others; he who labours with the body is governed by others.

He that has tasted the bitterness of sin will fear to commit it; and he that has tasted the sweetness of mercy will fear to offend it.

The triumph of a woman lies not in the admiration of her lover, but in the respect of her husband, and that can only be gained by a constant cultivation of those qualities which she knows he most values.

THE ROYAL EFFIGIES OF FORTÉVRAULT.—Lord Stanley has informed one of the Vice-Presidents of the Archaeological Institute that the four fine effigies of our early sovereigns now at Fortévrault have been "offered" to Her Majesty by the French Government, and that they have been accepted. This state of the case seems one difficult to deal with, but we should like to know if it be meant that the emperor himself made the offer. Now that the circumstance is being known the public voice in the

neighbourhood of the once famous abbey is being raised against the removal. The propriety of such a course seems questionable, and those interested in such subjects should be stirring ere it be too late. To allege they are not now well cared for may be a matter for the consideration of the *Conservateur des Monuments Historiques* of our neighbour, but a poor one for the officials being permanently driven from the spot where the sovereigns they commemorate were buried.

STATISTICS.

IN 1866 there were 13,289 miles of railway open in the United Kingdom, and the number of passengers, exclusive of season and periodical ticket holders, was 251,862,715. In that year there were 221 persons killed, and 1,132 injured; in 1864, 222 killed, and 795 injured; in 1863, 184 killed, and 470 injured.

ATLANTIC TELEGRAPH.—The subjoined analysis, taken from the *Bulletin*, of the receipts of the Atlantic Telegraph, from the opening of the line to the end of February, will be regarded with interest by the shareholders. From the opening of line, July 28, to October 31, 96 days, at 20s. rate, 76,379l. 19s.; average per day, 796l. From November 1 to February 28, 120 days, at 10s. rate, 98,748l. 11s.; average per day, 823l. From the opening of line to February 28, whole period, 216 days, 175,128l. 10s.; average per day, 811l. For the month of February, 25,235l. 0s. 6d.; average per day, 901l. Average per day to October 31, 1866, 796l.; ditto for the month of February, 901l. Increase per day, 105l.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE tolls taken last year on the metropolitan turnpike roads north of the Thames amounted to 24,902l.

WE hear that the estate of Skeldon has been purchased by the Duke of Portland at the price of 100,000l.

THE largest roof in the world is said to be at St. Petersburg. It is a single arch of iron, covering a room 650 ft. by 150 ft., which is used for military purposes, balls, &c.

AN immense deposit of pure rock-salt has been discovered at Pahrinagat, in Nevada, California, the mineral being in many cases of perfect transparency.

AT a meeting of Volunteer officers, recently, it transpired that the amount of damage done to crops, &c., at Brighton at the last Easter Monday Review was about 300l.

SILK threads, gilt, when exposed to a very intense current of artificial electricity, are acted upon in a singular manner. The gold which covers the silk is volatilized without the threads being broken by the heat.

A SINGULAR HORSESHOE.—A Missouri blacksmith has prepared a horseshoe for the Paris Exhibition made of raw ore from Iron Mountain. Half the shoe is finished, and the other half shows the ore as it is dug from the mine.

AN EXPENSIVE WATCH.—The costliest watch that was ever made is said to have been one which was constructed in 1844 for the Sultan Abdul Medjid, who must have found it rather inconvenient, since it was five inches in diameter, and struck the hours and quarters on wires, with a sound resembling that of a powerful cathedral clock. It cost 1,200 guineas.

THE SOUND OF THUNDER.—The duration of the rolling sound of thunder is the time which the sound requires for traversing an interval of space equal to the difference in length of the two lines drawn from the observer to the two extremities of the flash. If we multiply by 337 the number of seconds for which the rolling of the thunder has lasted, we shall obtain in metres the difference between the two rays drawn to the two extremities of the flash.

DUTY ON DOGS.—The bill to repeal the duties of assessed taxes on dogs, and to impose in lieu thereof a duty of excise, has been printed. From and after the 5th of April in England, and 24th of May in Scotland, assessed taxes on dogs are to cease. The tax on dogs kept within the year ending 5th April, 1867, in England, and 24th May in Scotland, is reduced to seven shillings. The duties to be paid after these dates is five shillings. The duty and licences are to be under the management of the Commissioners of Inland Revenue. Notices are to be fixed on church doors stating where the licences can be obtained. The penalty for keeping a dog without a licence is 5s. and a similar penalty is inflicted for not producing the licence when required. The Act is not to apply to dogs under the age of six months.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

J. NORT.—Try a mixture of hartsorn for it; that not being successful, apply to a medical man.

Y. SATVILL.—Apply to the Stamp Office, Somerset House, Strand; Waterloo Bridge side.

CHERTON VILLA, T.—We shall be happy to give our opinion on any contributions sent.

I. L. nineteen, dark and handsome, no income, but fond of home and children.

DESPAIRING ONE.—You are in all probability suffering from indigestion, in which case you should consult a medical man at once.

B. R. HANDALL.—Your handwriting is quite fit for a mercantile appointment. Why not apply at once to some firm, or advertise stating your qualifications?

AMIE.—1. The *Melrose* Routledge have published several cheap works on athletic exercises. 2. Exercise should be regular, but not too violent; increase by degrees.

Z. Z. Z.—Meerschaum is the froth of the sea, mixed with the clay—it is, in fact, a clay found on the shores of the Crimea—Meerschaum meaning the froth of the sea.

DICK TURPIN desires a recipe for "growing hair on the face." We know nothing better than exercise in the open air, and the use of bear's-grease.

UNA ST. CLAIR.—*Luna* means moon. Your handwriting is not good even for a school girl of fourteen; it is too formal, nevertheless, with practice and care you may improve.

L. RETOR.—1. A marriage in a chapel without a person in holy orders being present is not legal. 2. The marriage would be legal without doubt.

WHITE PLUCK.—We cannot tell you how to get rid of a swollen vein in the foot without seeing it. Why not consult a surgeon at once, who would probably cure you?

J. T. W.—To the best of our opinion we must have answered your question. Repeat it, however, and we will again reply to it.

DANIEL R.—An apprentice is bound to keep to the strict letter of his indentures. Do not try to evade them. If you have any just cause of dispute consult a solicitor.

NED.—The Lord Chamberlain is, without doubt, the personage to whom you should apply for a licence. In the present state of the law it is his lordship's *ius* that decides.

CHARLES OSMOND, twenty-eight, dark hair and eyes, and an artist. The object of his choice must be from twenty to twenty-four, light hair, blue eyes, and good tempered.

AMIE and ROSA, both respectfully connected. "Annie," nineteen, 5 ft. 2 in., fair, and blue eyes. "Rosa," twenty-two, 5 ft. 5 in., dark, with black eyes.

G. R. H. G., twenty-four, 5 ft. 9 in., good looking, dark, black hair and eyes, and a miller, with an income of 30s. per week. Respondent must be about the same age.

ANDREW.—"Forty pounds and upwards" and "upwards of forty pounds" are equivalent terms, and both are grammatically correct.

A JOURNALIST'S SHOWMAKER.—You may adopt any name you please. The question has been more than once decided. You should, however, advertise the change in the different daily newspapers.

ALEXANDER.—You ask the meaning of *Shrove Tuesday*. It is the Tuesday after Quinquagesima Sunday, or the day immediately before the first day of Lent, being so called from the Saxon word to *shrive*, which signifies to confess.

AMIE.—Use bear's-grease; if that will not help you nothing will, as the colour may arise from constitutional causes. You had better, perhaps, consult a surgeon, who will give you a mixture.

A SUFFERER.—Really to preserve the teeth you cannot do better than use a soft tooth-brush and cold salt and water two or three times a day—say, after meals. If your gums are diseased consult a dentist.

ARTHUR L., twenty-six, 5 ft. 8 in., dark eyes, hair, and whiskers, no income except 30s. per week, and a mechanic. Respondent must be fair, fond of home, and from eighteen to twenty; money no object.

A FARMERSON, 5 ft. 9 in. height, with dark hair, eyes, beard, and moustache, of gentlemanly appearance, a very good temper, and would make a very indulgent and kind husband. Respondent may be a widow, but must have some means or business, and must not be more than thirty-five.

WATCH FACE.—Any watch and clock maker would answer your purpose. Apply either to Mr. Dent, of the Strand, or to Mr. Benson, of Ludgate Hill, or indeed to any other respectable watch-maker. It is not our province to recommend any one house in particular.

CONSTANT READER.—1. Louis Philippe, King of the French, was designated the "Citizen" King, because he was chosen by the people at the dethronement of Charles X. Louis Philippe was the head of the House of Orleans, the younger branch of the House of Bourbon, the head of whom and pretender to the throne is now the Duke of Bordeaux, or Count de Chambord. Louis Philippe's heir, the other pre-

lender, is living in England and is the Count de Paris, son of Louis Philippe's eldest son, the Duke of Orleans, who was killed by the overturning of his carriage in Paris. 2. It is customary for the English Sovereign to read the speech from the throne, although at the opening of the present Session of Parliament the speech was read by the Lord Chancellor, notwithstanding Her Majesty was enthroned in full state. 3. The present Queen has frequently read the speech. 4. Authors are not bound to affix their names to their works—to wit, it was some years before the public knew who was the author of the *Waverley Novels*.

AN ANXIOUS INQUIRER.—Although only nineteen years of age, you are both legally and morally bound to keep to your contract. Making the engagement at the comparatively mature age of nineteen, you are assuredly amenable to the law if you break it.

UNA (a subscriber from the first).—The preparation of which you enclose an advertisement may be good; at all events, it can't be any harm; try it if you can afford it, for it is expensive; our advice, however, would be to use simple bear's-grease.

EDWARD FAIR.—Try good bear's-grease. (Your handwriting is very good, but not enough to clear you a situation in a merchant's office; a merchant's clerk should be well versed in accounts, and be a tolerable linguist—at least, as far as European languages are concerned.)

NIGHTINGALE and PRINCESS (cousins).—"Nightingale" is eighteen, 5 ft. 2 in., dark hair, blue eyes, considered good looking, and would prefer a tradesman in good circumstances. Respondents must be about two-and-twenty. "Princess," sixteen, 5 ft., fair, and dark hair and eyes.

A SHOR GIRL, of medium height, very fair, good looking, and good tempered, should not despair of getting married. Bide your time, do not *seek*, and you will be sought. Your good colour, domestic habits, and before-mentioned qualities, will not fail to gain admirers.

ONE OF THE CUCKOOS.—The definite article is placed before the name of the O'Donoghues simply because he is *The* O'Donoghues—*The* O'Donoghues of the "Glen," so named from his possession of an estate. It is an Irish title arising from use and custom, and not derived from Royalty. It means, in fact, the chief of a clan.

THE RAILION BOY.

My home is the broad, bounding ocean,
And I love the wild wall of the blast;
There's a charm in the water's commotion
I miss when the tempest is past.

Oh, I gaze with a warm admiration
Far away o'er the billow's white crest,
Though I think of the loud lamentation
For the loved "neath the waters at rest."

Oh, I list with a lover's devotion,
When the tumult is passing away,
To the sound of the storm-tossed ocean,
As alone in my hammock I lay.

C. B.

CONJUGIUM.—Exactly so. Anyone furnished with arguments from the mind will convince his antagonist much sooner than one who derives them from reason and philosophy. *Gold* is a wonderful clearer of the understanding; it dispates every scruple and doubt in an instant, and accommodates itself to the meanest capacities.

EDWARD SMITH.—The salary is about 50l. per year at the commencement. You would require, however, considerable office—to wit, that of the Minister of the time, being of the office you name, to obtain such an appointment. From your handwriting we do not think that you would have any chance of passing the examination.

LUCKY ASHROFT.—With the deficient education evinced by your letter to us make no attempt to "get on the stage," for you will assuredly fail. You can, however, of course, apply to the manager of the Lyceum, or, in fact, any manager. How can you reasonably expect to obtain any such engagement without having first served an apprenticeship—say, at a "private theatre"?

JONATHAN.—Ash Wednesday is so called from the ancient custom of fasting in sackcloth and ashes. (These ashes are made of brushwood or palms, charred, dried, and sifted for the purpose.) Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent, is observed in the Church of England by reading the curse pronounced against impenitent sinners, to each malediction the people being directed to say, *Amen*.

A CONSTANT READER.—1. In times of peace the authorities having the pick of all England would not be likely to accept in the English army a man with a *pigeon* breast, and for this simple reason that it is a malformation—to wit, men with flat feet, which, by the way, can be hardly called malformation, are not accepted. 2. The daily but judicious use of dumb-bells would be of service to you.

J. MAUNDER.—1. The examination would consist in nothing more than reading, writing, and arithmetic as far as the office you name is concerned. 2. Having the interest you say, you should first consider what position you are competent to hold, or the examination you can undergo, and then apply for some definite post. It is enough for M.P.'s, however willing they may be to befriend you, to get you a nomination, leaving it to you to indicate what you are fit for.

HANNAH W. wishes for a recipe for artificial beauty. How foolish! 1. Artificial appliances would only make matters worse. "Hannah" wishes to be made thinner and paler. We never know that a pale thin girl was considered more beautiful than a plump rosy lass. Be content. 2. Flesh-works are only to be had by time; they belong to a certain age, and are constitutional. 3. Use a good wholesome bear's-grease.

JOSEPH.—Maundy Thursday is the day before Good Friday. The word is supposed to be derived from the Saxon, *við Manned*, a basket, because on that day alms were distributed to the poor; others say that it received its name from *Die Manduit*, the day of command, the command being that Christ gave His disciples, in order to commemorate Him in the last supper or communion which He that day instituted.

LADY.—Yes; two gifts God has bestowed on us that have in themselves no guilty taint, and yet show an essential divineness. *Mind* is one of these, which seems as if it were not born of earth, but lingers with us from the gates of heaven, breathes over a sad or doubting heart as if to in-

spire it with a consciousness of its own mysterious affinities and to touch the cords of its unsuspected and undeveloped life. The other gift is that of *souls*, which, though born of earth, we may well believe (if anything of earthly soil grows in the higher realm) will live on the banks of the river of life. Flowers neither in gladness nor sorrow are incongruous, they are appropriate in every phase of life, whether it be the marriage hour or the sick-room. They give completeness to the associations of childhood, and are appropriate even by the side of old age, for they are suggestive and symbolical of the soul's perpetual youth, the inward blossom of immortality, the amaranth crown.

GUARDIAN.—1. To prevent consumption you should obey the ordinary laws of health—viz., moderate muscular exercise in the fresh air, temperate living, the frequent use of the sponge bath, but, above all, beware of getting wet feet. Her present Majesty's father, the Duke of Kent, died from neglect of the latter precaution. 2. To your second question we can only say that consumption having once set in, we can offer no cure, the only course is to consult the physicians of that admirable institution the Brompton Hospital.

ALICE, LIZZIE, and NELLIE, three highly respectable girls. "Alice," twenty-six, 5 ft. 3 in., a brunette, inclined to *enbon-point*, brown eyes, black hair, nose slightly *retroverted*, and a pleasing expression; "Lizzie," twenty-two, 5 ft. 4 in., dark brown eyes and hair, and domesticated; and "Nellie," twenty-three, 5 ft. 6 in., large gray eyes, light brown hair, good teeth, is not pretty, but intelligent and cheerful, thoroughly domesticated, speaks French fluently, and is at present *seconde de chambre*. Respondents must be respectable young men, not under twenty-four, and steady and affectionate. "Alice," "Lizzie," and "Nellie" are sure that they will make good wives to loving husbands; *carré* will be exchanged.

ANGELINA.—1. Your case is indeed very distressing; nevertheless, your husband having deserted you and your children for so many months, and never having written to you, it would, even could you, be but a wild-goose chase to go to New York after him. New York is a vast city, and you would probably starve, far better for your own and your children's sake to "bide your time." He will probably return, or send to or for you. In the meantime endeavour to earn a living; at all events, under the circumstances, there is no want of charities in London. You might obtain a steerage passage to America at the cost of a few pounds, but in your case the money would be wasted, even if you could obtain it. 2. Did you want to emigrate to an English colony you might obtain a free passage by application to the Government Emigration Commissioners in Westminster, but we fear not to America.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED.

TOM is responded to by—"Lizzie F.," nineteen, medium height, fair, blue eyes, brown hair, good looking, a member of temperance society, and merry and good tempered—"Dark Lizzie," eighteen, slim, with dark hair and eyes—"Gentle Annie," who is in service, tall, slight, dark hair, hazel eyes, and good looking—"Mary," sixteen, 5 ft. 3 in. in height, auburn hair, dark hazel eyes, fair, and good looking—"A Servant," twenty, not good looking, but can cook a dinner—"May B.," seventeen, and good looking—"Margaret," sixteen, blue eyes, brown hair, good looking, and a teatotal—"M. J. G.," seventeen, blue eyes, and light brown hair; and—"B. W.," dark brown hair, in a good situation, and thinks she will suit him.

FRANK again by—"Pallina," who thinks him just the style she requires, but would like to know what trade or profession he is, and if good tempered and lively.

H. B. by—"May," nineteen, fair, sparkling blue eyes, wavy hair, amiable disposition, and will have 5,000l. on her wedding-day.

A. P. B. by—"Aurora Floyd," 5 ft. 9 in. in height, very genteel, beautiful figure, and very ladylike—"F. H. O.," twenty-one, 5 ft. 3 in. in height, light brown hair, dark blue eyes, good looking, amiable, lively, educated, and well connected, but no money—"Eosie," twenty-two, medium height, fair, blue eyes, and well educated—"Matty H.," eighteen, 4 ft. 11 in. in height, and fair; she has no money, but has had a good education and is domesticated—"E. P.," nineteen, light hair, fair, good tempered, domesticated, and respectable; and—"O. P.," middle height, fair, affectionate, good tempered, and not without property.

FANNY BUSTIN and MILLY CLARK by—"Martin" and "Jack." "Martin," twenty, 5 ft. 4 in., dark, slight moustache, good looking, holds a respectable situation as clerk at a salary of 60l. a year, and would prefer "Fanny." "Jack," twenty, 5 ft. 5 in., dark brown hair and moustache, good looking, gentlemanly manner, is fond of home, holds a respectable situation in one of the first-class mercantile houses in the City at a salary of 50l. a year, and would prefer "Milly," and—"Charles S." and—"Louis H.," who are sailors, good looking, twenty-three, and sober and steady.

FANNY BUSTIN by—"Harry Mortimer," twenty-seven, 5 ft. 10 in., and in a very good situation in the City, which will be better—"Charles Richard,"—"Willie," a Scotchman, of the same age, considered good looking, in a good situation, with splendid prospects, and of steady, respectable habits—"O. Barton," twenty-one, 6 ft., good looking, son of a field officer of the British Army, and about to reside abroad—"J. C.," twenty-one, 5 ft. 8 in., fair, and good looking—"F. B. G.," Southampton, of medium height, dark, good looking, highly connected, and will shortly commence business for himself; and—"William," twenty-seven, 5 ft. 4 in., passable in appearance, steady, respectable, with a loving disposition, and an engineer by trade, but has no money.

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